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THE STREAM OF ENGLISH BIOGRAPHY

Readings in Representative Biographies

With Historical and Critical Introduction

By

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To

E. C. L. M.

WHO HELPED TO MAKE THIS BOOK

PREFACE

This volume has been prepared in the conviction that readers and students of biography may wish to know something of its history through representative examples of the art. The stream of biographical writing in England has had a fairly steady flow from the sixteenth to the twentieth century. The progress and diversity of this large contribution will be made clear in the historical sketch, while the complete units from notable biographies adequately illustrate the various types of life-writing old and new. Autobiography has been included throughout, but no informal species such as diaries, journals, and loose reminiscences. No attempt has been made to treat American biography as a distinct development; as a small tributary of the great stream, it has been represented by several examples which easily mingle with the larger flood.

It is of course greatly to be desired that complete works should be read, and it is hoped that the taste of a few choice morsels may lead to wholesale consumption. That is, no doubt, the ardent but unrealized wish of every compiler of an anthology. The great biographies lend themselves remarkably well to excerpting. Boswell's *Johnson,* for instance, is more familiar in parts than as a whole; and it is better that outstanding biographies be read in fragments than not at all. As it is, many of them, because of their great length, are known by name only. Moreover, a book of selections from classic biographies furnishes excellent material for the study of prose style, for in them is to be found some of the best writing in our literature. The charming cadences of Cavendish and Walton, the clear white light of Mill, and the playful urbanity of Adams and Strachey, admirably illustrate the range and flexibility of our mother tongue.

The titles of the passages are the present editor's, though in one

or two cases the phrase is taken from the text, and the notes are his. The brief introduction to each selection gives such information about the biographer, his subject, and the occasion of his writing as may be necessary for an understanding of its relation to the whole work. Two bibliographies will be found at the end of the book—one of important essays and volumes on biography, and the other a list of famous biographies from Plutarch to Strachey, chronologically arranged. Popular editions are named wherever these exist. The list is intended to be suggestive rather than exhaustive.

In the preparation of the preliminary account of English life-writing, I have made frequent reference to the scholarly work of Professor Waldo H. Dunn, *English Biography* (1916), which is indispensable to the student of that vast and varied field. To other works listed in the bibliography I am indebted in one way or another. Acknowledgments to publishers will be found attached to certain later selections. In writing the general introduction and in making the selections I have, of course, read and re-read extensively. Every biography mentioned in this volume has been examined, and every one discussed has been read.

J. C. M.

University of Virginia.

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English Biography

The great object of biography must always be the portrayal of character, the probing and the revelation of the subtle mysteries and secret of personality, which always teases us and always eludes us just when it seems most firmly within our grasp. Sometimes the end is best achieved by an elaborate process of definite analysis of different qualities. Sometimes the personality is made to stand out by a long series of narrative developments in which the central subject gradually grows upon us with a fuller and more absorbing completeness. Different artists will pursue different methods; but the purpose is always the same, to make us better acquainted with the intimate quality and varied depth and richness of a human soul.

—Gamaliel Bradford, *The Art of Biography.*

ENGLISH BIOGRAPHY

It is not easy to construct a definition of biography that fully covers the various kinds of life-writing through the ages. If biography should be defined as the truthful record of a human life, it would be objected, first, that most early and many later biographies are not truthful; and, second, that a mere record is just a dry chronicle. It might be more satisfying to the modern mind to describe biography as that type of writing which reveals, in narrative form, the outer and inner experiences of one personality through another. A biography is permanently interesting when, through the insight, sympathy, and art of the writer, it has become an expression of personality rather than simply the history of a life. In a sense biography is personalized history, and all successful life-writing is in essence the refinement of fact into spirit.

Biography is related to history on the one side and to literature on the other, and in more recent times it might claim kinship with philosophy and even with science. Earlier life-writing was regarded as a branch of history. The story of a man's life, or of an important section of it, was frequently included, for diversion or instruction, in a long stretch of historical narration. The familiar story of Joseph and his Brethren, which has been called the first biography, is a memorable part of the Book of Genesis; the life of David is recorded in other books of the Bible; and many little biographies are embedded in the histories of Herodotus. Centuries later, in England, Bede's *Ecclesiastical History* and Geoffrey of Monmouth's *History of Britain* mingle biography with history. Even Plutarch, in the first century, the most famous of ancient biographers, made large use of history in treating comparatively the lives of illustrious men. It is hardly possible, of course, to isolate the career of a notable man from the life of his time, the stuff of which history is made, unless emphasis should be shifted from external events to those inward workings of the mind which essentially reveal a man's self. The older biographers were more outward in their processes, not much given to the analytical probing of souls which delights their modern

successors. As long as biography was merely a handmaiden of history, it had no general recognition as an art. When, later on, life-writing was undertaken by literary men, it naturally became more artistic and at last won a distinctive place and a name.

The word "biography" was first used by Dryden, poet and essayist, in 1683, and "biographer" was first employed by Addison, essayist and poet, in 1715. By this time, as will be shown later, biography was allying itself with literature. Biographical writing had, of course, been long practised in England before it became a literary art. The same is true of prose fiction. Long stories and short stories are plentiful in English literature before Daniel Defoe and Samuel Richardson, but not until their time, the early eighteenth century, did the type we call the novel come of age, after a somewhat errant and dissolute youth. It is worth noting, moreover, that the early English novel, like biography, was, or at least professed to be, related to history. Defoe and Fielding called their novels "histories"; other novelists then and since have also used the biographical method, while still others have regarded the life of their hero as the history of a soul. The close connection between the novel and biography, both in form and spirit, has often been remarked. The older fashion of biographizing fiction has yielded to the later vogue of novelizing biography. This reciprocal relation between biography and the novel, growing out of the traditional affinity of the two types, shows that the biographer has contributed something of ballast to the airy bark of fiction, while the captains of that ancient vessel have invested the biographer with a shining garment of fancy. As the art of biography has grown more literary, its practitioners have tended to become interpreters by touching their material with imagination and humanity.

To classify biography is almost as difficult as to define it. It would be generally agreed that there is a large class of biographies which manifestly carry a moral lesson or sustain a thesis, which hold up a character for admiration and imitation or which "prove" or "disprove" something. This class of life-writing has been termed "applied biography." It is written not primarily to reveal a personality in its inward and outward workings, though these may be incidentally or even deliberately shown, but to validate an opinion or to point a moral. Another kind of biographical writing has been called "pure." A pure biography has no purpose except to tell the truth, to paint

a lifelike portrait, to reveal the man as he was, "naught extenuating nor setting down aught in malice," in praise or in blame. Examples of both kinds will be referred to in the course of the following review of English biography.

It is the purpose of this introductory sketch to trace rapidly the development of life-writing in England from its early form as a chronicle of outward events in an individual's career to its maturity and present practice as an artistic portrayal of personality. In the first English biographies, usually written in Latin, an eminent man in church or state was made the subject of a pious narrative weighted with panegyric and moral purpose. Often the brief account of the saint was included in a long record of religious and secular happenings, as in Bede's *Ecclesiastical History* of the early eighth century. There were, besides, separate lives of saints, such as Adamnan's *Life of St. Columba,* Bede's *Life of St. Cuthbert,* and Eddius's *Life of Wilfrid,* works which collectively are more accurately termed hagiography, or sacred writing. In these laudatory sketches there is no distinction between the legendary and the historical; each little book is a medley of the natural and the supernatural, of reality and myth. Occasionally, as in Bede, there are descriptive passages of real beauty, but they are all but lost in the wide welter of things sacred and profane. From the ninth to the thirteenth century, ecclesiastical chronicles continue in Aelfric's *Lives of the Saints* and other compilations which, though less saintly, are mainly concerned with churchmen, as if religion were all of life. In this long stretch of holy living and dying there are three lives of great men, one a layman and the others priests, which break the monotony of the prevailing chronicles. One is the *Life of Alfred the Great,* by Bishop Asser, in the ninth century, written from his intimate association with the King, discursive and often irrelevant, and only relieved from general dullness by some anecdotes of doubtful authenticity. The others are the *Life of Anselm* (1140) by Eadmer, a Canterbury monk, which has been praised as a piece of vivid human portraiture; and the *Great Life* (*Magna Vita*) of Hugh, Bishop of Lincoln, by the Abbot Adam, which depicts the man more than the ecclesiastic. These primitive biographies, in the language of the church and some of them translated into the vernacular for the benefit of those unacquainted with Latin, were the reading of learned and lay folk who lived in and around cathedrals, abbeys, and monasteries, for the manuscripts

had no wide circulation. Their tone is conventionally religious, and as specimens of life-writing they do not compare in range and human interest with the works of ancient masters of the art of biography in the pagan world.

Between the thirteenth and sixteenth centuries there was little or no biographical writing in England, unless one wishes to regard as such the dry records of antiquarians, the anecdotal history of William of Malmesbury, and the romantic stories of Malory. As the tired chroniclers ceased troubling the healing wells of the saints, there developed in France and England an unquenchable thirst for the more exhilarating fountains of romance. And so fictitious lives, hardly more wonderful than the old chroniclers' real ones, entertained courtly readers, and the biographer went in quest of knights and ladies and their deeds in fairyland. The artistic and intellectual stimulation of this courtly romance and the influx of foreign literature into England through the Renaissance must have had, among other direct effects, that of provoking curiosity about the lives of men famous and dead. At any rate, it is worthy of note that the rise of modern biography is coincident with the extraordinary revival in poetry, prose fiction, and the drama, which we call the Elizabethan Age; and that the first two biographies which show real artistry were written about the beginning of that vital era in English history.

These two books, Roper's *Life of Sir Thomas More* and Cavendish's *Life of Cardinal Wolsey,* are the first fruits in England of that impulse toward life-writing as distinct from history which was later to find such abundant expression. William Roper, son-in-law of Sir Thomas More, is at great pains to explain, at the beginning of his little volume, why he writes it: "Forasmuch as Sir Thomas More, Knight, sometime Lord Chancellor of England, a man of singular virtue and of a clear, unspotted conscience, . . . was in his day accounted a man worthy famous memory; I, William Roper (though most unworthy), his son-in-law by marriage of his eldest daughter, knowing no one man that of him and his doings understood so much as myself, for that [because] I was continually resident in his house by the space of sixteen years and more, thought it therefore my part to set forth such matters touching his life as I could at this present call to remembrance." He goes on to say that, although many important things have "slipped out" of his mind "through negligence

and long continuance of time," he is writing at the request of his friends so that what he does remember shall not utterly perish. From these friends and from others he got additional facts about More; he refers also to certain letters of More to Mrs. Roper and briefly quotes from them. Sir Thomas More, scholar, statesman, and author of *Utopia,* was executed in 1535, on the charge of treason because he had refused to acknowledge the legality of "the act of supremacy" by which Henry VIII was made head of the Church. Many years afterward, perhaps about 1550, Roper finished his biography, which circulated in manuscript among his friends and was not published until 1626. It is a small book, ramblingly written, and incomplete in the sense that certain events of More's life are omitted; but it is nevertheless a readable and evidently a sincere narrative. The account of More's behavior in misfortune wins the sympathy of the reader by its simplicity and restraint. Vividness is achieved through the occasional use of dialogue, which, whether intentional or not, is mildly humorous in its implications. The scene in prison between Sir Thomas and his wife, who urges him to agree with the king against his conscience and come home, is not without comic effect; as an example of indirect characterization of both husband and wife, it is capital. These personal touches make Roper's life of his father-in-law more convincing than any previous life-sketch. The very informality of the story gives it an air of truthfulness. The writer is not composing history; he is telling his reminiscences of a man he knew well. And while he shows small ability in construction, and here and there succeeds in convicting himself of a lack of high intelligence, he does depict character with enough of art to make his book literature.

George Cavendish's *Life of Wolsey,* written a few years later than Roper's work, is a more readable book. This is due partly to the subject and partly to the writer; Wolsey was a more dramatic figure than More, and Cavendish was an abler man than Roper. The rapid rise of Thomas Wolsey to power and his tragic fall from his dizzy height, would make good material for literature in any age, even in the hands of an inferior writer. Cavendish had rare gifts of discernment and description. His story of Wolsey's career is also rambling, but better organized, with a finer distribution of emphasis. He is notably good at leading up to climaxes; he gradually excites the reader's curiosity by carefully staging, so to speak, the preliminary

scenes, manipulating his persons and dialogue so as to create suspense; then, as in the arrest of Wolsey, he springs the final surprise with cumulative effect. The dramatic quality of his situations imparts color and motion to his account of his master's experiences here and elsewhere. The biography is an irregular series of moving pictures, from Wolsey's gorgeous entertainments as envoy in France and as host to foreign ambassadors at Hampton Court, to the last journeys on his mule among his parishioners in the North and the death-scene at Leicester. Cavendish was a man of imagination; he had a feeling for words and consequently a sense for musical and effective phrasing; you cannot always be certain whether he is making personal observations or quoting, so skilfully does he shift from direct to indirect speech. Certainly he is the first biographer to deal with his material as a literary artist. The modulated style is a fitting garment for reflections on the vanity of human ambition, tragically exemplified in the individual whose inner life he seeks to interpret. Cavendish does depict an individual, does paint a personality; and, while professing a moral purpose, he has left a biography so mildly didactic and commemorative that the reader may hardly detect anything more in it than a tribute of loyalty done in mellow English.

There is nothing else in the sixteenth century that merits the name of biography proper, but evidences of increasing interest in life-writing are not wanting. In 1579 Thomas North's translation of Plutarch's *Lives,* from which Shakespeare got matter for his Roman plays, was published and became at once widely popular. This generally read collection of ancient biographies may have moved Francis Bacon in 1605 to make the following comment on the lack of this kind of writing in England: "For 'Lives,' I do find strange that these times have so little esteemed the virtues of the times, as that the writing of lives be no more frequent. For although there be not many sovereign princes or absolute commanders, and that states are most collected into monarchies, yet are there many worthy personages that deserve better than dispersed report or barren eulogies." But elsewhere in the same work (*The Advancement of Learning*) he remarks: "But Lives, if they be well written, propounding to themselves a person to represent, in whom actions both greater and smaller, public and private, have a commixture, must of necessity contain a more true, native, and lively representation." Bacon himself wrote what he called a *Life of Henry VII,* which is rather a history of the

times than a biography of that monarch. Bacon regarded biography, or life-writing, as just a branch of history, a conception which lasted until the eighteenth century; and, furthermore, Bacon, wise in analyzing knowledge, was without that warm human sympathy which can reconstruct and breathe the breath of life into "worthy personages."

The seventeenth century is rich in memoirs, "brief lives," and character-sketches, and less rich in formal biography. It does not fall within the province of this sketch to discuss such productions as memoirs, diaries, journals, and other more or less amorphous life-writing. These autobiographical exercises no doubt had some influence on the development of formal biography, as they did on the essay and the novel; they are essentially the raw material of biography as the newspaper is the ephemeral stuff of history, which may, through selection and elimination, be moulded into artistic unity. Some of the memoirs of the seventeenth century, notably those of Lady Fanshawe and the Duchess of Newcastle, who also wrote a life of her husband, are entertaining and occasionally instructive, but they do not properly belong to an account of biography as defined at the beginning of this narrative. Nor is it necessary to dwell at length upon the "brief lives" of Fuller, Aubrey, and Anthony Wood. Thomas Fuller called his collection *The History of the Worthies of England;* John Aubrey named his, *Minutes of Lives;* and Wood entitled his, *Athenæ Oxonienses*. Fuller wished "to entertain the reader with delight" by his life-sketches relieved by anecdotes; Aubrey collected a vast amount of miscellaneous material in his *Minutes,* which he put in writing "tumultuarily," as he wrote to Wood, for whom he gathered information; and Wood compiled a kind of dictionary of biography. There were numerous other biographical collections at this period, among them the one containing sketches of the poets by Edward Phillips, Milton's nephew. Less definitely related to biography are the popular character-sketches of the day by Sir Thomas Overbury and others, derived from Theophrastus, Greek philosopher and pupil of Aristotle. The "characters," as they are called, are imaginary types, fanciful essay-portraits, not representative Englishmen. Such a character-sketch, being usually drawn from no particular individual, is fiction, not biography. In the essays and novels of the next century similar idealizations are found; and in the *Lives* of Izaak Walton, soon to be considered, there is certainly some

idealized portraiture. The popular character-sketch of the day, a product of the spirit of the time, had no marked influence on biography.

Of all the miscellaneous assortment of memoirs, loosely constructed reminiscences, and psychological sketches in the seventeenth century, one autobiography, or personal memoir, deserves some words of comment because of its uniqueness in the range of early life-writing. This is the *Autobiography* of Lord Herbert of Cherbury, chronologically the first in importance of this species of life-narrative. It is proper to remark here, before proceeding with Lord Herbert, that autobiography, more formally written since Gibbon's work in the later eighteenth century, was not at first distinguishable from the hodgepodge memoir closely akin to diary and journal. The author of embryonic autobiography, or memoir, not only put himself into his work but everybody and everything else, relevant or irrelevant, that occurred to his discursive mind. In Lord Herbert's curious creation, however, there is a plan which is followed with a fair degree of consistency. It is a direct narrative of events and reflections, not a thesaurus of gossipy anecdotes as so many of the contemporary memoirs are. He begins with an account of his ancestry, talks of his childhood and youth, carefully sets forth his views on the kind of education a gentleman should have, passes rapidly over his Oxford days, and devotes the rest of his book to his life in London and in France. As the narrative proceeds, the book increasingly resembles a picaresque novel in a rapid succession of adventures in each of which he is the hero. The recital is intensely personal. The pronoun "I" is used with extraordinary frequency; it occurs thirty times on two pages of Dircks's edition chosen at random. His egotism is equaled only by his impeccability. "I can affirm to all the world truly," says he, "that from my infancy to this hour I told not willingly anything that was false, my soul naturally having an antipathy to lying and deceit." Lord Herbert was a gay and valiant cavalier, "the courageous captain of compliments, . . . the very butcher of a silk button, a duellist, a duellist," who would have delighted Mercutio. His *Autobiography* is a human document that is both irritating and refreshing.

The story of formal literary biography really begins with Izaak Walton's five *Lives* (1640–1678). Walton, who was a methodical man, after gathering and carefully arranging his material, pains-

takingly composed his biographies. They proceed in a leisurely fashion, as one fancies the reflective fisherman himself moved, from the birth to the death of the men whose virtues he records. They were revised, rearranged, enlarged; the *Life of Donne,* in particular, was greatly expanded by the inclusion in a later edition of many interesting facts collected after the first had been published. A Walton biography is a narrative which, with a backward glance at ancestry, proceeds through anecdotes, occasional letters, a few real or imaginary conversations, interspersed comments, and poems or prayers, to a final eulogistic summary after the monument, properly epitaphed in Latin, has been erected. *The Life of Donne,* for instance, on which Walton spent a great deal of loving labor, ends with an elaborate account of his death, burial, and the visitations of admirers to his tomb, one of whom wrote these lines "with a coal on the wall":

> Reader! I am to let thee know,
> Donne's body only lies below;
> For, could the grave his soul comprise,
> Earth would be richer than the skies.

With the sentiment of these mortuary verses Walton was in full accord. Just before this he had himself written: "Thus variable, thus virtuous was the life; thus excellent, thus exemplary was the death of this memorable man." Of that eminent divine's early moral indiscretions, his unregenerate worldliness, his agonies of doubt, he says little or nothing. Of Donne's lyric poems of love, by which today he is favorably known, he writes apologetically; they are "loosely scattered recreations" of his youth over which he shed penitential tears. It is Donne, the saintly dean of St. Paul's, who is in the foreground of the picture. And thus, likewise, is he preoccupied with the goodness, the holy living and dying, of his other churchly friends, Hooker and Sanderson; almost as much so with the sanctity of the poet Herbert; and less so, naturally, with the worldliness of Wotton, who died a holy man. The limitations of Walton as a biographer, implied in these statements, are his partial portrait-painting, his monotone of panegyric, his inability to make his men different from himself, and consequently his failure, despite his evident sincerity, to humanize them. If the flesh had only been more with him! Devout and tranquil dreamer, meditating in green pastures by still waters, he

was untouched by the vanities and fierce conflicts of his time. His own quietness of spirit he attributes, beautifully but erroneously, to the men whose lives he is charmingly and superficially depicting. His occasional sly touches of humor, however, his entertaining digressions, and, above all, the exquisite modulation of his long musical sentences, so far redeem his omissions and inaccuracies, that his *Lives* continue to be read as literature. They are memorable in the development of English biography as the first deliberately executed pieces of life-writing by a literary man, and as the forerunners of a long succession of formal "lives."

In the stretch of nearly forty years during which Walton was intermittently composing his *Lives,* certain biographical writing by others must be noted.[1] Reference has already been made to the brief life-narratives of Fuller, Aubrey, and Wood, and to the interesting memoirs of Lady Fanshawe and the Duchess of Newcastle, the "incomparable Princess" of Charles Lamb and her contemporary admirers. *The Life of William Cavendish, Duke of Newcastle* (grandnephew of George Cavendish, Wolsey's biographer), by his wife, invited both extravagant praise and carping censure. The University of Cambridge, to which the author presented a copy, replied that they "cease not to bestow ten thousand embraces upon every page of that book which hath so noble and immortal a subject as is his grace the Duke of Newcastle." In quite a different strain is Pepys's record in his *Diary* of "March 18, 1668.—Thence home, and there in favour to my eyes staid at home, reading the ridiculous history of my Lord Newcastle, wrote by his wife; which shows her to be a mad, conceited, ridiculous woman, and he an ass to suffer her to write what she writes about him and of him. So to bed, my eyes being very bad." That the book was popular is proved by its appearance in three editions (one a Latin version) in less than ten years; indeed, it continues to be read in later editions; in the early nineteenth century Charles Lamb paid it a glowing tribute. The Duchess of Newcastle, like Lord Bacon, conceived of life-writing as one of three divisions of history, defined by her as "the history of the life and actions of some particular person." By "particular person" was meant, of course, a man distinguished in church or state, whose public serv-

[1] Lord Brooke's *Life of Sir Philip Sidney* (1652) is too crudely written to deserve more than a passing mention. The account of Sidney's death, however, shows dignity and restraint. The passage is famous which relates how the mortally wounded Sidney offered a fellow soldier the drink, saying, "Thy necessity is greater than mine."

ices and private virtues it seemed proper to commemorate as a part of the history of the times. That is what the Duchess did in the *Life* of her husband, who had imposed only one restriction, that she should not attack his enemies. This injunction she faithfully observed. "This book," she writes in her preface, "would have been a great volume, if his Grace would have given me leave to publish his enemy's actions." It would also have been a livelier volume. The Duchess of Newcastle was an inaccurate, frank, and honest writer; and her life of the Duke is as truthful no doubt as conjugal biographies usually are.

About the same time was published a very different sort of composition, Thomas Sprat's *An Account of the Life and Writings of Mr. Abraham Cowley* (1668), as an introduction to an edition of that poet's works. It is little more than a sketch, in the form of a letter addressed to "Mr. M. Clifford," and is an example of what has been termed "discreet biography." In the course of this coldly formal tribute, Dr. Sprat, a learned clergyman, says that Cowley excelled in his "letters to his private friends; in these he always expressed the native tenderness and innocent gaiety of his mind." And then Sprat proceeds to remark that they should not be published. His reason for omitting the letters seems extraordinary to the modern reader, used to complete exposure: "The truth is, the letters that pass between particular friends, if they are written as they ought to be, can scarce ever be fit to see the light. . . . The very same passages which make writings of this nature delightful amongst friends, will lose all manner of taste when they come to be read by those that are indifferent. In such letters the souls of men should appear undressed; and in that negligent habit they may be fit to be seen by one or two in a chamber, but not to go abroad into the streets." The very means, commonly employed later, of making biography vividly real, the insertion of letters into the narrative, Sprat rejected. Walton, his contemporary, was using letters, and in the next century the practice was to become general. Sprat simply continued the traditional adulation in life-writing, familiar from saints' lives to Walton's, and consequently retarded rather than advanced the development of English biography. No apter estimate of Sprat's *Life of Cowley* could be made than is found in Dr. Johnson's comment a hundred years later: "His zeal of friendship, or ambition of eloquence, has produced a funeral oration rather than a history: he has given the char-

acter, not the life of Cowley; for he writes with so little detail, that scarcely anything is distinctly known, but all is shown confused and enlarged through the mist of panegyric." [2]

During the seventeenth century there were other "lives" published, such as Gilbert Burnet's *Life of William Bedell,* Parr's *Life of Usher,* and Bishop Hackett's *Scrinia Reserata* in honor of the Rev. Dr. John Williams, but these can hardly be called literature. In the midst of a dearth of readable life-writing John Dryden, versatile translator and critic of foreign and native classics, wrote an introduction to an edition of Plutarch's *Lives* (1683) in which he used the name "biography" for the old term "histories" and "lives," deriving it from the Greek word for the story of a "particular" individual. Certain concluding sentences of Dryden's lucid exposition of individualized history, anticipated by Lord Bacon in a passage already quoted, are signally important in biographical criticism as looking before and after:

> Thus, then, the perfection of the work, and the benefit arising from it, are both more absolute in biography than in history. . . . The pageantry of life is taken away; you see the poor reasonable animal as naked as ever nature made him; are made acquainted with his passions and his follies, and find the demi-god a man.

"You see the poor reasonable animal as naked as ever nature made him"! Could there have been a more realistic foreshadowing of the drab undress of twentieth-century biography?

The eighteenth century is distinguished by the rise of the periodical essay and the birth of the modern novel. It was a social century. The coffee-houses, the taverns, and the theaters were the meeting-places of the wits, the literary men, the beaux, and such of the nobility as loved the town more than the country. The different classes of society were getting acquainted, and the "common man" was advancing in social consequence and mental culture. Literature, as usual, reflected the popular interests of the time, especially the urban. The essayists were not philosophers or divines, composing involved treatises on ethical and religious themes, as in the previous century. Steele and Addison, with their numerous fellows, were virtually editors, writing short pieces of social and literary criticism, character-sketches, and stories. The stuff of their daily labors was the material

[2] Johnson's *Life of Cowley,* p. 1.

of biography, but not consecutively organized as in the narrative of a life. Sir Roger de Coverley figures in a succession of scenes, which, taken collectively, constitute a fragmentary biography. The novelists were writing imaginary biography. Defoe began his long series of realistic narratives with life-stories of noted criminals, passing on from actual events and characters to fictitious situations and persons, so plausibly presented as to deceive readers until this good day. Fielding so involved the notorious Jonathan Wild in his book that it is difficult to separate fact from fiction; and he, Defoe, Richardson, and Smollett, gave their novels personal titles. Defoe's are constructed like biographies; those of the other novelists less so; but all follow, more or less, the biographical plan.

The essay and the novel of the eighteenth century are personal forms of literature. They abound in details of description, manners, and conversation. They are gossipy, circumstantial, and intimate; in short, they are essentially realistic. Addison wrote in the *Spectator* that his intention was to bring "philosophy out of closets and libraries, schools and colleges, to dwell in clubs and assemblies, at tea-tables, and in coffee-houses." And the novelists were quite as eager to democratize literature by putting into their books respectable men and women who belonged to clubs and foregathered at tea-tables as well as villains and courtesans. This realism of the essay and the novel affected the writing of biography by exciting an interest in personalities and stimulating curiosity about the lives of famous and infamous people of the day and of other days. Biography is generally thought of as concerning itself only with the famous. But notorious persons may be quite as interesting. The *Newgate Calendar,* containing brief accounts of the lives of criminals, was one form of popular biography; another collection is Alexander Smith's *Lives* of highwaymen, footpads, housebreakers, and shoplifters. There is a biographical rogues' gallery of the time. The outstanding purveyor of unsavory information about notable as well as notorious individuals of the early eighteenth century was the publisher, Edmund Curll, who brought out four volumes of *The Lives of the most Eminent Persons who died in the Years 1711, '12, '13, '14, '15.* These ephemeral productions are mentioned for the purpose of showing how democratic biography was becoming in response to popular curiosity.

In the stream of regular, or formal, biography, the most consider-

able work of the early eighteenth century is Roger North's *Lives* of his three brothers, Lord North, Sir Dudley North, and Dr. John North, "persons of celebrated worth and ability in their several professions." The author of these three "lives" supplements the biographical trilogy with an account of his own life. The narratives are interspersed with anecdotes, letters, and other documentary memoranda, which give variety to the recital as well as insight into personal character and contemporary events. The retired life of Dr. John North, master of Trinity College, Cambridge, is more inwardly sketched than the public and far more active careers of his two brothers. Roger North in more than one place directly deprecates the conventional panegyric of life-writing. While he himself is not free from it, his laudations are comparatively mild; he is manifestly striving to tell the truth by including, to use his own words, "scars and blemishes as well as beauties," and by avoiding "an outline filled up with roses and lilies." The result is life-like portraiture. The structure of his narration is somewhat annalistic; biography was still the "history of a life," but it was getting humanized into what North asserts it should be, an individual picture.

Almost exactly contemporaneous with the publication of North's *Lives* (1740), written some twenty years before, appeared Colley Cibber's *Apology for his Life,* an autobiography as self-centered, in its way, as Lord Herbert's. Cibber's book is probably read today more for instruction than for pure pleasure. It is an informing story of stage life, colored with much extremely egotistic talk by Cibber, who for that and other reasons, was the butt of satire for the literary men of his day. As a record of self-revelation, wholly apart from its value as a dramatic history, Cibber's *Autobiography* is entertaining reading in spots. Its informality and perfect abandon ally it with diaries and memoirs. The very antithesis of a piece of composition like Sprat's sketch of Cowley, Cibber's work is a perfect example of diffusive biography.

There was not much notable life-writing in the middle years of the century. The *Biographia Britannica* and the labored *Life of Raleigh* by William Oldys that painstaking antiquarian, Ayre's *Memoirs of Pope,* and several very readable life-sketches by Goldsmith, belong to this period. The one significant production in the development of English biography was Johnson's *Life of Savage* (1744), which will be mentioned again in connection with his *Lives*

of the Poets. The *Memoirs of the Life and Writings of Thomas Gray* (1775), by William Mason, friend and executor of the poet, is important in biographical literature because the life of Gray is largely told through letters. There were, as we have seen, letters in Walton's *Lives;* Sprat, in his *Life of Cowley,* regarded the use of letters as indelicate; but Mason deliberately employs them, strings them along, as the novelist Richardson[3] had done, for narrative purposes. He might, he says, "have written his life in the common form perhaps with more reputation to myself, but surely with less information to the reader." Accordingly, he became a sort of compiler, or editor, with connecting comments, "letting Gray become his own biographer." Mason, however, seemed to feel that his new method needed explanation and defense lest, in abandoning the traditional practice, he might be charged with not having really written the life of Gray. In fact, he proceeded to edit the letters, omitting parts, transposing sentences, and actually adding passages, so that some of the letters appear considerably changed. After his prefatory statement that Gray shall relate his own life, this mutilation of his correspondence shows that Mason thought a compromise with established procedure was the safer way. Though his allegiance to the new life-and-letters methods was not perfect, Mason is to be remembered as the first English biographer who deliberately adopted the coöperative plan in life-writing, which has been used ever since.

Three years after Mason's letter-life of Gray appeared, Samuel Johnson was asked by some London booksellers to prepare a series of "Prefaces, biographical and critical, to the most eminent of the English Poets." In 1781 this collection of biographies was published as the *Lives of the English Poets,* "which," said Johnson, "I wrote in my usual way, dilatorily and hastily, unwilling to work and working with vigor and haste." These comparatively brief "lives" continued the old prefatory placing of life-narratives; the later publication of them as a separate work is one evidence of their difference from preceding "lives" in certain important respects. These differences are, first, the inclusion of literary criticism as an integral part of biography; and, second, the conscientious determination of the

[3] The letter-novel, begun by Samuel Richardson, was common in the eighteenth century, and fictitious letters have, of course, been frequently introduced into stories since. Some of the greatest letter writers in English literature, Walpole, Lady Mary Wortley Montague, Fanny Burney (Madame d'Arblay), and Cowper, belong to this century. The letter in the novel and in biography links history and literature.

biographer to tell the truth. The range of biography was accordingly extended, and the direction of it diverted from panegyric to appreciation. Johnson was a distinguished critic with a mind full of information on men and books, and he was the first person of critical temper to undertake life-writing. Long before he was engaged to write the lives of the poets, he had published a life of Richard Savage, a minor poet with whose struggles Johnson, himself poor, had sympathized; and later, in writing the lives of other poets, he used substantially the method followed in his first biography. His practice was to narrate the life and then to discuss the works, concluding with an estimate of the poet's merits. The life, character, and contribution, critically examined, constituted the biography. He gave little space to funerals and he pronounced few eulogies. He tried to present a truthful life-portrait in a literary and philosophic frame. He subjected his men to critical analysis and in so doing evolved a personality, as difficult a thing to do as successfully to call spirits from the vasty deep. Thus Johnson treated fifty-two English poets of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, most of whose names have faded from the popular mind. Thoughtful readers have been inclined to choose the lives of Dryden, Pope, and Addison as most artistically portrayed. With Johnson the art of life-writing as conceived today really begins. He may be regarded as having initiated pure biography, life-writing unburdened with the weary weight of thesis or moral purpose.

Not only did Johnson practise the art of biography with more thoroughness and distinction than any previous life-writer; he also held well-defined opinions on the subject, formulated with his customary clearness and vigor. Other critics, notably Addison, had indeed made scattered remarks on when and how to write "lives"; but they had no theories and, besides, they were not writers of life-narratives. Johnson, both critic and biographer, had positive views which he practically illustrated. He liked to set forth these views in his essays and in his conversations with Boswell. In one of his *Rambler* papers [4] Johnson comments at length on the superiority of biography written soon after the death of a man over that composed years afterward when he has become a vaguely remote figure.[5]

[4] October 13, 1750.

[5] This view is also touched upon in his *Life of Addison:* "Lives can only be written from personal knowledge, which is growing every day less and less, and in a short time is lost forever."

Truthfulness, he goes on to remark, is attained through nearness to the private life. "The business of the biographer is often to pass lightly over those performances and incidents, which produce vulgar greatness, to lead the thoughts into domestic privacies, and display the minute details of daily life, where exterior appendages are cast aside, and men excel each other only by prudence and by virtue." Like the later French critic Sainte-Beuve, Johnson held "that more knowledge may be gained of a man's real character by a short conversation with one of his servants than from a formal and studied narrative, begun with his pedigree and ended with his funeral." Delay in writing a biography, he thought, might make for impartiality, but would blur the memory of volatile and evanescent incidents that are seldom "transmitted by tradition." He realized, however, the dangers of hasty contemporary life-writing for the gratification of public curiosity, one result of such immediacy being the temptation to hide the faults or failings of friends. "We therefore see," says he, "whole ranks of characters adorned with uniform panegyric, and not to be known from one another but by extrinsic and casual circumstances. . . . If we owe regard to the memory of the dead, there is yet more respect to be paid to knowledge, to virtue, and to truth."

In Boswell's *Life* there are recorded, here and there, bits of conversation on biographical writing. Once, on a visit to Trinity College, Oxford, Johnson and Boswell spent the evening with Thomas Warton, literary critic. "We talked of biography. Johnson.—'It is rarely well executed. They only who live with a man can write his life with any genuine exactness and discrimination; and few people who have lived with a man know what to remark about him.' " [6] Again, elsewhere, the conversation turning to the same subject, Boswell reports: "Talking of biography, I said, in writing a life, a man's peculiarities should be mentioned because they mark his character.—Johnson.—'Sir, there is no doubt as to peculiarities: the question is, whether a man's vices should be mentioned.' " Boswell, when recording this, recalled a previous conversation during which Dr. Johnson maintained that "if a man is to write *A Panegyrick,* he may keep vices out of sight; but if he professes to write *A Life,* he must represent it as it really was." In concluding his paragraph, Boswell remembered that

[6] Johnson appreciated, however, the difficulties of the biographer who writes of a contemporary. "The necessity of complying with times and of sparing persons is the great impediment of biography." *Life of Addison,* edition of 1811, p. 97.

he had quoted Dr. Johnson, in the *Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides,* as maintaining "that a man's intimate friend should mention his faults, if he writes his life." These references to Johnson's ideas on life-writing show that truth in biography is, in his opinion, of prime importance, and that association with a man is the best way to get it. His own *Life of Savage,* whom he well knew, illustrates the point, for it is more detailed, more personal, less formal and critical, than the lives of other poets, whom he could not have familiarly known and of whom, therefore, he wrote from information furnished by others and from his own reading of their works. His insistence that a perfectly veracious biography depends on personal converse and observation finds, of course, a signal illustration in Boswell's *Life of Johnson,* which is now to be considered.

Boswell says in the introduction to his *Life of Johnson* (1791) that throughout his twenty-one years of association with that great man he had constantly in mind the scheme of writing his life. Johnson, aware of this, furnished him with many details of his early days. By his "facility in recollecting" and his diligence in recording Johnson's conversations, he accumulated the enormous mass of material from which he selected the incidents, anecdotes, and letters that largely make this supreme biography. In the years of composition, Boswell's own collection was added to by friends of Johnson and by others. On the completion of the work Boswell wrote a notice, or "advertisement," of it in which he remarked: "The stretch of mind and prompt assiduity by which so many conversations were preserved, I myself, at some distance of time, contemplate with wonder." He goes on to speak of the pains he took to gather information, whether from persons or books, and by way of illustration, adds: "I have sometimes been obliged to run half over London, in order to fix a date correctly; which, when I had accomplished, I well knew would obtain me no praise, though a failure would have been to my discredit." The plan professedly adopted by Boswell was in general that of Mason in his *Life of Gray,* but with so great a difference in execution as to warrant the feeling that Boswell soon forgot all about Mason and his letter-book. With Boswell the narrative is kept going by conversations rather than by letters. Letters there are in plenty, but Johnson does not tell his own story; it is Boswell who, directly or indirectly, is master of the moving show. For the *Life of Johnson* is a long series of situations, forming, dissolving, reforming,

and fading out, with characters changing, except for the one dominating figure of Johnson and somewhere on the stage, right or left center, James Boswell. The salient impression the book, as a whole, makes is a concatenation of groupings and regroupings, a succession of slowly shifting scenes.

How did Boswell do it? He was actually with Johnson less than one year, irregularly distributed over a score of years of friendship. It must not be supposed, as is implied in some accounts, that the two men were constantly together. The longest continuous association was during Johnson's visit to Scotland and the tour of the Hebrides, the *Journal* of which is virtually, though not formally, a part of the *Life*. It was after this memorable visit that Mrs. Boswell made the comment to her husband: "I have seen many a bear led by a man, but I never saw a man led by a bear." The "bear" led Boswell into many brief sojourns in England, and when they were separated frequent letters passed between them. Boswell made the most of these visits. Many a time he sat up all night writing out his recollections and filling out his notes on conversations of the day or evening. His industry was extraordinary and his memory phenomenal. Apparently he kept all his memoranda, filing his letters and his transcribed conversations with infinite pains. We know now that he used only a part of his material in the *Life,* and we also know that he sometimes refined Johnson's frank vernacular. Can we, indeed, be certain that we have the sage's exact conversations? Boswell once exclaimed to Mrs. Thrale: "O for shorthand to take this down!" To which she answered: "You'll carry it all in your head; a long head is as good as shorthand." If his rough shorthand was unequal to the task of taking it all down, his amazing memory was sufficiently tenacious of colloquial details to fill in the gaps. And whether he always reproduced Johnson's talk verbatim is, after all, of minor consequence. The best evidence of its essential faithfulness is found in the corroboration of Johnson's friends, who heard much of it.

Those who read Boswell's *Life of Johnson* only in spots, dipping into it here and there, may easily reach the conclusion that it is a collection of more or less unrelated conversations interspersed with letters and desultory comment, a miscellany of quotations and descriptions, a glorified commonplace-book. It does, indeed, lend itself singularly well to such random reading, for it is a life-book of detachable pictures, of almost infinite variety, suited to every mood,

"from grave to gay, from lively to severe." But it is emphatically not a thing of shreds and patches. It is extraordinarily well put together. It has the detailed diversity and the larger unity of a Gothic cathedral. In the first place, the *Life of Johnson* is all about Johnson and, through his mind and Boswell's, a little about a lot of other people living and dead. In the next place, the account proceeds more or less pictorially, with abundant dialogue, from the birth to the death of the hero, in the orthodox fashion. Less than one-fourth of the book is the pre-Boswellian Johnson, reported out of his own mouth; this segment is so skilfully fused with the rest of the circle, wrought out of Boswell's vital knowledge, that no trace of jointure is preceptible in the perfect welding. The fine artistry of Boswell is best realized by a continuous reading from beginning to end. "The labor and anxious attention with which I have collected and arranged the materials of which these volumes are composed," said he, "will hardly be conceived by those who read them with careless facility."

The contribution of Boswell to the art of biography is immense. His originality as a biographer is conspicuous, first, in his combination of narrative with other forms; and, second, in his individual psychology. Other biographers had used anecdotes, dialogue, incidents, journals, and letters. From the beginnings of the "history of particular lives" one or more of these elements of portraiture had been employed. As we have seen, anecdote relieved the crude narrative of Asser, enlivened the tragic tale of Cavendish, letters broke the monotone of Walton's pious portrayal and actually told the story of Mason's *Gray,* and the journal figured in various memoirs, fictitious and real. There were whole books of anecdotes, like Spence's, and volumes of "characters." And there were Johnson's own analytical studies of the poets. But Boswell combined these stock materials of life-writing into a coat of many colors, cleverly piecing them together into something very like a seamless garment. The *Life of Johnson* is a book of anecdotes, if you like, about a man and his friends; it is a collection of definite impressions, if you prefer, by a curious observer with pencil sharpened to record good talk; or it is a realistic narrative of the intellectual adventures of a wise man and his disciple; or, finally, it is a volume of critical opinions and acute comments on life by a philosopher. The many-sidedness of Boswell's work, centered in a personality, has commended it to many generations and made it timeless.

It remains to consider briefly the individual psychology of Boswell's performance, for here he is most original. Johnson is, of course, always in the spotlight, like Hamlet, the observed of all observers. On him is focused Boswell's and the reader's attention. Recall how careful Boswell is to make us visualize him physically: the large, uncouth figure, the scrofulous face, the convulsive twitchings, the nearsightedness, the restlessness of his hands, the spasmodic movements of the body, the sudden and violent starts. You are not given these and other personal details once and for all. You get them as you go along. His dress, his manner, his peculiarities, his melancholy, his superstitions, his prejudices, are revealed either by direct description or through the eyes of others. "Mr. Langton was exceedingly surprised when the sage first appeared. He had not received the smallest intimation of his figure, dress or manner. From perusing his writings, he had fancied he should see a decent, well drest, in short, remarkably decorous philosopher. Instead of which, down from his bedchamber about noon, came, as newly risen, a huge uncouth figure, with a little dark wig which scarcely covered his head, and his clothes hanging loose about him. But his conversation was so rich, so animated, and so forcible—." Ah, there he is, as it were, in a nutshell; and the rest of the book is about the man and his conversation. Not before had a biographer taken such pains to paint his man outwardly and inwardly. It was no idle boast of Boswell in the introduction of his great work: "I will venture to say, that he will be seen in this work more completely than any man who has ever yet lived. And he will be seen as he really was; for I profess to write not his panegyric, which must be all praise, but his life."

Boswell succeeded also in partially disclosing himself while he was revealing Johnson, so that the life of his great friend is not altogether a one-man book. Most biographers, indeed, doubtless give themselves away, let you see other personalities through their own, for no life-writer can wholly detach himself. Boswell so regularly involves himself in the story of Johnson's life that the work is part autobiography. He introduces subjects of conversation, argues with Johnson, asks him questions—some of them trivial or positively foolish—draws him out in various ways, sometimes invites crushing retorts from the master and verily gets them. He becomes a fool that he, or the company, may have wisdom or diversion. From what we see of him in the *Life* and in the Hebridean *Tour,* we conclude that

he was most companionable—"clubbable," as Johnson puts it—was not without personal charm, had great intelligence, a sense of the ludicrous, and loyalty in friendship. In his early manhood Boswell had one exceptional opportunity offered him: he met Johnson at Davies' bookstore, cultivated him, immortalized him, and through him entered the temple of fame himself. The *Life of Johnson* represents a fortunate conjunction of a man and his task. The science of biography, or more properly speaking, the philosophy of life-writing, Boswell learned from Johnson in their frequent talks on that subject, but the art of biography was his own achievement. The structure, the easy style, and above all, the reality of his persons and scenes, reveal Boswell as a creative literary artist.

Before the appearance of Boswell's work, other books on Johnson had been published in the years immediately following his death (1784), among them Mrs. Piozzi's *Anecdotes* and Sir John Hawkins' readable *Life*. But with Johnson's *Lives of the Poets* and Boswell's *Life of Johnson* English biography at last freed itself from history and attached itself to literature. Henceforth the literary man, whose uneventful life seemed to the older biographers not worth recording, shared with churchmen and statesmen the honors of life-writing. Johnson, a man of letters, had not only written the lives of other men of letters but had himself been made the subject of a great biography. A noteworthy change had by this time come over the spirit of biographical composition. The objective narrative of events in an individual's life was taking on a richer coloring of personality. Life-portraiture was being humanized, with a shift of emphasis from bare statement to interpretation, involving critical appreciation. Toward the close of the century a nascent sense of psychological and esthetic values showed itself in life-writing, and biography was becoming a literary art.

Autobiography, as practised up to this time, was, in the main, a mixture of personal detail and contemporary history called "memoirs" by the authors of it. In this sketch only those individual memoirs have been considered in which the writers have frankly made themselves the heroes of their own stories. The numerous memoirs that are little more than journals, or diaries, or romantic narratives, have not been taken into account.[7] Formal autobiography,

[7] These include, besides those already mentioned, Sir Kenelm Digby's *Memoirs* and Richard Baxter's *Narrative of the Most Memorable Passages of his Life and Times*, both of the seventeenth century.

classifiable as literature, really begins with Benjamin Franklin, and Edward Gibbon. Hume's brief sketch of his own life is too scant, too skeleton-like, and too lacking in charm of style, to warrant discussion here. The autobiographies of Franklin and Gibbon promptly won renown and have long been numbered among the world's classics.

Franklin's *Autobiography,* like Gibbon's, is a fragment. Written in England, France, and America, the record abruptly ends with the year 1762, when Franklin was fifty-six. Composed for pleasure and instruction, this work has probably been more widely read than any other book of its kind. It was first printed in a French translation and has since been published in numerous American and foreign editions. To every American schoolboy it is held up as an epitome of the national philosophy of life and, next to the Declaration of Independence, the charter of success and the highway of happiness. Throughout this life-story of the making of a successful man, Franklin preaches by example and precept the gospel of thrift, with perfect clarity and common sense. Though lacking in beauty and elevation, his book is a human document of sincerity and absorbing interest and America's most famous contribution to biographical literature.

Gibbon's *Autobiography* is very different. It has little to recommend it to the popular taste. Gibbon was a literary man, with a passion for history and the ancient classics. Born into an independent fortune, he knew not the struggles of a "self-made" man and he cared little for democracy. One thinks of him, as report had it, as composing his monumental history in powdered wig and beruffled shirt, dressed up to match the dignity of his imperial theme. The language of his memoir, though less formal than that of his greater work, is still the diction of the life-long classicist. There is a certain ironical incongruity in linking his book, although contemporaneous, with Franklin's; for there could hardly be two men whose lives had less in common or whose styles are more divergent. What spiritually associates them is their sincerity as writers of life-narratives. With these two, one an American and the other an Englishman, the high point in autobiographical writing was reached. Neither one, however, has proved that Johnson was right in holding that every man's life may be best written by himself, but the two have done the best there is in that species of composition.

And yet Johnson was partly right, as will be shown in the history of nineteenth-century biography from Moore and Lockhart to Carlyle and Froude. Boswell, as we have seen, by the use of conversation, letters, and journals, caused Johnson to tell much of his own life. Boswell's method set the fashion for many years to come. It is, in truth, a more vital process of unfolding a life than the strictly narrative, which almost inevitably tends to become both laudatory and hortatory; "pointing a moral" is no more the business of the biographer than it is of the novelist or poet. Reality is more directly achieved by the skilful introduction of autobiographical matter into the life-narrative. It has been argued, however, that in slowing down the momentum of the recital by the intrusion of journals and letters, or even of extended dialogue, vividness and dramatic power are sacrificed. The biography becomes documentary, like chronicle or history, whereas it is essentially a story of a life, resembling a novel, and not a record. That is a more modern view of biography, which will be considered toward the end of this historical sketch. At the present stage of its development, at any rate, the scheme of Boswell was in vogue and long continued. Most life-writers, failing to find a more excellent way, went on following him.

During the first decade of the nineteenth century there were written several "reconstructional biographies" of men long famous and dead. One of these is William Godwin's *Life of Chaucer* (1803), damned by the late Professor Lounsbury, eminent Chaucer scholar, as "the most worthless piece of biography in the English language"; another is Sir Walter Scott's *Life of Dryden* (1808), a critical biography, with detailed attention to literary background and the "times" of Dryden, the forerunner of many scholarly biographies composed in a scientific spirit for students of literature. The first important literary biography of the nineteenth century is Southey's *Life of Nelson* (1813), which has been admired because of its brevity, pleasing style, and rapidity of movement. It is not a great biography, but there are passages of vivid description and dramatic narration which arouse greater enthusiasm than the book as a whole. Southey was an industrious writer of artistic temper who, like Goldsmith, "touched nothing that he did not adorn." His classic life of Nelson is not done in the Boswellian manner. Rather, it reverts to the ways of Walton. Southey recalls to mind not only the method but also the matter of Walton, for he is given to eulogy and he choses public men

for portrayal—Nelson, the mighty seaman, and in his other biography, Wesley, the great preacher.

The first outstanding work of the century in the Boswell tradition is Thomas Moore's *Life of Lord Byron* (1830). Moore, himself a poet of considerable note in his day, was a friend of the tempestuous minstrel whose life-story many have essayed to tell. They had each pledged the other's health in wine and song, exchanged many letters, and enlivened their gay circle with merry quips and sparkling jests. After Byron's melodramatic career of gloom and glory had romantically closed at Missolonghi and his ecclesiastical critics had been reassured by his burial at Newstead rather than at Westminster, Moore assembled the dead poet's journals and letters and strung them along into a story of his life. The task was as difficult as the opportunity was great. Standing somewhere between his friend's enemies and admirers, he sought to placate the first group and to please the other. The result was disappointing. In suppressing some of his documents he fell short of the truth, in order to satisfy the conventional canons of good taste. Macaulay, reviewing the work on its first appearance, was agreeably impressed, but later critics have almost uniformly emphasized Moore's failure to measure up to an exceptional opportunity. In the light of fuller knowledge and more liberal moral standards, such unfavorable criticism is doubtless justified. We want the whole truth. But was Boswell himself absolutely truthful? At all events, Moore put together, with connecting comment, a vast array of autobiographical matter, somewhat chaotic in arrangement, from which emerges, rather hazily, an early nineteenth-century Don Juan, recognized with some effort by the reader. And we have not yet done with picturing and appraising that fascinating figure.

The most voluminous of standard nineteenth-century biographies is Lockhart's *Life of Sir Walter Scott* (1836–1838), published originally in seven volumes. Beginning with Scott's autobiographical fragment, Lockhart, reviewing it, continues the narrative, freely introducing into it letters and long extracts from diaries. His intention is stated thus: "I have endeavoured to lay before the reader those parts of Sir Walter's character to which we have access, as they were indicated in his sayings and doings through the long series of his years—making use, whenever it was possible, of his own letters and diaries rather than of any other materials, but refrained from obtrud-

ing almost anything of comment. It was my wish to let the character develop itself." He relates his father-in-law's life coöperatively, without panegyric or other kind of preachment. Though he does not record conversation, as Boswell does, his presentation is often quite as dramatic. He is much given to indirect characterization, disclosing the character of Scott through action, the impression of others, and his own poems and letters. Description, anecdote, formal exposition, are his usual means of unfolding his leisurely story. It is all quite realistic. Scene after scene is unrolled, as it were, in the flowing moving panorama, with cumulative effect. Pictorial interpretation fitly describes this deliberate performance. And it is very deliberate indeed. He spreads Sir Walter over seven volumes, *disjecta membra,* so to speak. But Scott was a classic figure in his own lifetime, had written a small library, bushels of letters, and a mile or two of journals. He was a spacious personality worthy of epic treatment. Still, the *Life of Scott* is terribly long, as Carlyle, his soundest critic, justly felt. Its prototype, Boswell's *Johnson,* next to which it may confidently be placed, has much more of Boswell than Scott's life has of Lockhart; for this Scotchman, by constant repression, reduced himself to low visibility. If he had been given to self-exploitation, his work might have been more interesting; if he had omitted some of those letters and journals, and substituted for them his own interpretations, his book would seem less formidable to modern readers. "But after all," says Thayer, "Scott was so nobly human in nature, so true in heart, so wholesome, that I find it hard to blame Lockhart for telling us too much about him." [8]

After Scott, the deluge! A miscellaneous flood of biographical publications descended upon Victorian England. Among these were the critical essays of Macaulay and Carlyle. Macaulay's contributions to the *Edinburgh Review* and other magazines were formal discussions of the lives and works of statesmen and men of letters. Out of a full and fluent mind he reviewed, with astonishing facility, scores of old and new biographies. Those who could or would not read the books themselves might get the lives in little, with ready-made criticisms, from the essays. The old book-review was no impressionistic lollipop, but a quite solid concoction for serious souls; and Macaulay was a diligent and brilliant purveyor of condensed biog-

[8] William Roscoe Thayer's *The Art of Biography,* p. 114.

raphy and literary criticism. Carlyle, himself a biographer, not only wrote what is probably the best general essay on the subject of biography, but discussed with great acumen, in his magazine articles, several of his favorites, Boswell's *Johnson,* Lockhart's *Scott* and *Burns,* besides certain foreign writers. These long essays form one of the most valuable collections of biographical criticism in English literature. From them might be assembled pages of luminous comment on the theory and practice of biography. Besides Macaulay and Carlyle there were other reviewers—Southey, Scott, Francis Jeffrey and, later, Gladstone—who made lasting contributions to the critical aspects of life-writing. Furthermore, it should be noted that English critics were turning to foreign literature for subjects of biographies, as illustrated by Carlyle's *Life of Frederick the Great* and his essays on Goethe, Schiller, Richter, and Voltaire, and George Henry Lewes's entertaining *Life of Goethe.* This mid-century activity in biographical interpretation immensely stimulated public interest in this form of literature and definitely differentiated biography from history.

The variety of life-literature in the nineteenth century is impressive. There are memoirs, reminiscences, recollections, confessions, portraits, sketches, conversations, letters, besides many formal autobiographies. The passion for self-exposure was rampant. Then, too, there was the dominant form of prose literature, the novel, which was, both in structure and expression, not seldom an imaginative species of life-writing. This was especially true in the so-called "historical" novel, and hardly less so, autobiographically, in numerous stories which, in thinly-disguised fashion, reflect the spiritualized experiences of the authors. Of biography proper, or improper in the sense of erractic variation from pure biography, there is one outstanding example. In the *Life of Thomas Arnold* (1844), headmaster of Rugby, by Dean Stanley of Westminster, there has been noted by Nicolson [9] a reversion to hagiography, or "saintly" writing. Less saintly, perhaps, but somewhat in the manner of "commemorative" biography, is Mrs. Kingsley's *Life and Letters of Charles Kingsley,* preacher, novelist, and poet. This is an example of the large class of family biographies which, inevitably, tend to become memorial volumes. It must be said, however, that the *Life of Kingsley* is a

[9] *The Development of English Biography,* p. 125.

readable narrative, interspersed with letters, of a vigorous and versatile personality, written with more judicial balance and less of panegyric than most works of its kind.

Three lives of women, one by a woman, deserve some comment here. The *Life of Hannah More* (1838), minor essayist and novelist, by William Roberts, is another letter-journal story, on the Mason-Boswell plan, which, like others of the type, was only mildly successful. Far more so was Mrs. Gaskell's *Life of Charlotte Brontë* (1857), the life of a novelist by a novelist. The portrayal of Charlotte Brontë's somber life at Haworth, her London visits, her literary labors and tragic experiences, is done with the beauty of tender sympathy. It is a biography of sentiment, colored by enthusiasm for a friend and literary colleague. A mistake or two about Charlotte's unfortunate brother do not invalidate the biography, which has long been regarded as a classic. There is no other woman's life of a woman that is more gripping in its hold on the reader, and that is a good test of life-writing as literature. In comparison Cross's *Life of George Eliot* (1884) is ponderous and dull. Cross was a man of literary interests who undertook to piece together his wife's letters and journals so as to relate her life with a minimum of direct narration. After a brief introductory sketch of her girlhood, he declared, "I have confined myself to the work of selection and arrangement." The result is a wooden performance, a piece of crude carpentry. George Eliot is neither pictured nor interpreted. The raw materials are put before the reader, from which he may, if he will, paint a portrait of the foremost woman novelist of the century. In the favorite life-and-letters succession belongs a very different work, George Otto Trevelyan's *Life of Macaulay* (1876). Trevelyan begins his biography with a formal declaration of his intention to portray Macaulay the man rather than the author. The essayist and historian, unable to write himself into his books, is more in need of a biographer, he says, than the novelist, who often involves himself autobiographically in his stories. The letters and journals of Macaulay are used to illuminate rather than to relate his life and are accordingly subordinated to the narrative. The story is told with a wealth of anecdote and a fullness of description to give it concreteness and vividness. While not dramatic, the narration proceeds with engaging clarity and sprightliness. Trevelyan's *Macaulay* is worthy of ranking in the company of

Boswell and Lockhart. The two-volume life-and-letters biography, by this time established in English literature, has since continued.

Life-writing in the latter half of the nineteenth century was extended to the composition of shorter biographies, arranged serially, of which the "English Men of Letters," the "Great Writers," "Beacon Biographies," "Heroes of the Nations," and other collections, are examples. The older "life-and-times" biographies, in which the writer combined extended comment on contemporary history, a popular form of political life-writing, flourished in that century. And harking back to the days of Aubrey, Wood, and Oldys, "dictionary lives" were continued, in a more accurate and highly organized form, by the publication toward the end of the century of the great *Dictionary of National Biography*. Meanwhile, numerous learned biographies appeared, monuments of scholarly research and reconstruction, of which Masson's *Life of Milton* is an illustrious example.

Much of this specialized life-writing was done by academic or popular publicists. The best-known example of a biography by one of the latter is the *Life of Dickens* (1872–1874) by John Forster, editor of *The Examiner*. A friend of Dickens, he was entrusted with a large amount of material, from which he constructed, with admirable diligence, a life of the most popular novelist of the century. Besides the life of Dickens, Forster, after many years of editorial experience, composed half a dozen other books on political and literary men, among them, Goldsmith, Swift, and Landor. His "lives" of Dickens and Landor have supplied basal matter for later biographers of those authors. Forster's journalistic labors had fitted him for writing rapid narrative and vivid description. His method is the reporter's: his own direct account is interrupted by long passages of what Dickens had told him or written out for him. This inclusion of the author's own story within the narrator's invests the book with an air of authenticity. It is a sort of internal documentation. Forster's *Life of Dickens* is the most successful of his biographies, partly because of his extraordinarily vital and dramatic subject, and mainly, perhaps, because of his professional sympathy with Dickens who was himself journalistic by instinct and practice. Forster devoted himself more to the business of life-writing than any of the more prominent biographers.

Quite independent of these several classes of life-writing is one

"idyllic biography," published midway of the century, Carlyle's *Life of John Sterling.* The tone of this tribute to a friend is lyrical. The volume is a prose "Lycidas" or "In Memoriam"; and, by a noteworthy coincidence, it was written the same year in which Tennyson's famous elegy was published. It brings to mind, not so much by its manner as by the conditions of its origin, Johnson's *Life of Savage,* which is also a "friendship's garland." There is one such book, much later, in American biography, George Herbert Palmer's *Life of Alice Freeman Palmer,* his wife, which, for the exquisite beauty of its style, may be linked in memory with the *Life of Sterling.* Like the latter is Carlyle's own volume of *Reminiscences,* chiefly of his wife, Jane Welsh Caryle, herself a letter-writer of charm and distinction.

Vastly different are Carlyle's other biographies. The *Letters and Speeches of Oliver Cromwell,* for instance, is a picturesque "reconstructional" life of the doughty Puritan Protector, based on laborious examination of documents and places. Carlyle believed that "history is the essence of innumerable biographies," and as a professed hero worshipper he centered his formal life-writing in heroic personalities. He depicted eminent personages in various fields of human endeavor —the prophet, the poet, the philosopher, the warrior, the man of letters—supermen by his treatment, illustrating his thesis that at bottom history is the record of the lives of great men. His autobiographical *Sartor Resartus* and his *History of the French Revolution* are mainly successions of scenes graphically portraying the individual.

Carlyle was himself an almost ideal subject for biography. His rugged personality and picturesque speech, besides his great renown as a moralist and writer of books, made him an inviting character for the biographer. As early as 1843 Carlyle had written in his Journal, commenting on a letter requesting "notes for a biography": "The world has no business with my life." Later, however, when it became clear that his life must be written, he reluctantly requested his friend James Anthony Froude to undertake the task and put in his hands materials for "a true likeness of him." Froude's nine-volume *Life of Carlyle,* awaited with eager expectation, was given to the public in complete form in 1884. An unparalleled storm of indignant protest straightway burst and raged for years. What had Froude done to evoke the tempest? He had, his critics said, probed into the privacies

of Carlyle's life and, with execrable taste, published to the world things about the living and the dead which ought never to have been disclosed; and in so doing, he had proved a traitor to his trust. This was the opinion of many in the later Victorian period, when intimate biographies were not the fashion. A later generation has not justified this view; and Carlyle himself, in the light of his own well-known ideas on the duties of a biographer, could hardly have condemned Froude for applying his principles. Years before, in reviewing Lockhart's *Life of Scott,* which was attacked on somewhat similar grounds, Carlyle had written: "The biographer has this problem set before him: to delineate a likeness of the earthly pilgrimage of a man. . . . Far be it from him to set down aught untrue; nay, not to abstain from, and leave in oblivion, much that is true. But having found a thing or things essential for his subject, and well computed the for and against, he will in very deed set down such thing or things, nothing doubting,—*having,* we may say, the fear of God before his eyes, and no other fear whatever." [10] Without fear of public opinion, at any rate, Froude courageously performed his allotted task.

In his introduction to the volumes on Carlyle's life in London, Froude discusses the duty of a biographer, explaining why he had left "no materials unused to complete the portrait"—which he attempted to draw. Realizing that "the sharpest scrutiny is the condition of enduring fame," he decided "there should be no reserve." Carlyle's life, he asserts, will bear the fiercest light, for it was an unblemished one from birth to death. This life he accordingly revealed, through letters and journals, with fullness and frankness. Froude's tone of detachment, sometimes touched with gentle irony, is distinctly modern. For instance, the playfully urbane comment on Carlyle's friendship with Lady Ashburton and his failure to draw Mrs. Carlyle into her magic circle: "He was gratified at finding himself appreciated by a brilliant woman, who ruled supreme over half of London society. She became Gloriana, Queen of Fairyland, and he, with a true vein of chivalry in him, became her rustic Red Cross Knight, who, if he could, would have gladly led his own *Una* into the same enchanting service. The 'Una,' unfortunately, had no inclination for such distinguished bondage." In its interpretative aspects

[10] *London and Westminster Review,* No. 12. This review of Lockhart's *Scott* is in Carlyle's *Essays,* Vol. 2, American ed.

as well as in its unprecedented candor, Froude's *Life of Carlyle* marks the beginning of a new era in English biography.

It is interpretation, indeed, that becomes in nineteenth-century biography a vitalizing feature. Letters and journals continued as authenticating documents, as they still do, but they were less relied upon to tell the story. From Mason's letter-life of Gray to Froude's life and letters of Carlyle is a long way. The evolution in biography from a simple narrative of outward events to a complex story of character was slow and irregular. The stream, figuratively speaking, widened and deepened without steady flow in one direction or without uniformity of coloring. It is not to be supposed, of course, that life-writers were consciously changing traditional practices. Having their materials and the urge to write, they generally proceeded to create a rather crude amalgam of stuff and story. In the eighteenth century, as we have seen, the novel had an influence on biography. This influence was even more marked in the nineteenth when the novel as a type of literature had its efflorescence. The biographer learned from the novelist how to interpret characters while telling a story. If Thackeray and Dickens and Meredith could people the imagination with Esmonds, Copperfields, and Feverels, all imaginary folk, why should not biographers make real men live again? They could not do this by merely reproducing dead men's diaries and letters any more than an artist can make a speaking likeness by dressing up a manikin in a dead man's clothes. The method of the novelist, which is artistic reconstruction, insensibly affected that of the life-writer; his lifeless materials and comments were vitalized.

The art of biography was also advanced in the last century by the methods of the scientist. The idea of evolution, generally recognized since the publication of Darwin's famous book in 1859, had a profound influence on historical and literary writing. Psychology, hitherto vaguely philosophical, was becoming definitely inductive. Historical investigation became scientific; fiction, reflecting the new sense of complexity and mobility in human life, became psychological; and biography, that sensitive hybrid of fact and fancy, likewise became scientifically inclined. But science does not create life; it examines and classifies. Biography, the art of vivid restoration, seeks to interpret the souls of men to posterity. What the growing preoccupation with science in the later nineteenth century did for

life-writing was, first, to clarify structure, and, second, to concentrate attention on the individual's inner life. In the older biography, except in Boswell, outward events were so projected to the front that the man himself was a blurred figure in the picture. He was lost, as Moore's Byron is almost lost, in the chaotic abundance of matter. When, following the promptings of the scientific spirit, biographers learned to subordinate document to delineation, there was a striking improvement in perspective; the raw materials, artistically subdued, made up the background, and the man depicted stood out distinctly in the foreground. And so it may be said that by the first decade of the present century, English biography, under stress of science and fiction, gained in clearness of presentation and in liveliness of portrayal.

In strong contrast with this clearer, more highly individualized portraiture is the older type-biography, which still continues. The latter has ever been the favorite kind of biographical writing on churchmen and statesmen. In reading Walton's "lives" of eminent ecclesiastics, for instance, one is aware of a process of abstract idealization. Such unscientific life-writing proceeds by deduction; a generalized concept has been formed which the Reverend So-and-So or the Honorable Such-an-One is made to fit. The Bishop of Lincoln, rather than Sanderson the man, is portrayed by Walton, and in old editions there is a cut of Lincoln Cathedral; the Prime Minister, rather than Pitt, is presented by Stanhope, and there well might appear a drawing of the Houses of Parliament; King Edward the Seventh is professionally depicted by Sidney Lee, and Lincoln the President is voluminously recorded by Nicolay and Hay. This official presentation is a weakness of life-and-times biographies in which the writer tries to show that his man is an embodiment of contemporary political movements or "tendencies." Such a tenuous portrait dislimns in the changing atmospheric currents, for it is little more than a ghostly time-spirit evoked from "the dark backward and abysm" of the years. Type-biography in general is a form of applied life-writing, a species dear to philosophers and literary men. If an abstract idea is incarnated, a superman is mentally born and glorified into an ideal for our admiring contemplation. *Heroes and Hero-Worship* by Carlyle, *Representative Men* by Emerson, the Heroes of this-that-and-the-other Series, are familiar illustrations to readers of the literature of biography. Whenever a statesman or

divine or philosopher or poet has, through an accretion of legendary lore, become apotheosized, it is difficult to humanize him. It has proved particularly hard to write pure biography of a warrior or statesman, so busy has been the myth-making faculty in converting them into sacrosanct symbols.

Successful biography belongs somewhere in the twilight zone between historic fact and psychological truth. If the biographer does not in a measure isolate his man from his times, he fails in individual portraiture and so in the faithful transmission of personality. There is, on the one hand, the danger of excessive documentation, growing out of preoccupation with accuracy of detail; and there is, on the other, the temptation to give free rein to the imagination in the process of reconstruction. The tendency in biographical writing at the end of the nineteenth century was away from the "life-and-times" treatment toward a more individual presentation. The choice of outer material was limited to those aspects of public activity which significantly reveal a man's character. A statesman like Gladstone, for example, whose long life was closely woven with the history of his times, must necessarily be portrayed in a different manner from Tennyson, who lived apart as an observer rather than a participant. Morley, Gladstone's biographer, recognized the difficulty of his task: "Every reader will perceive that perhaps the sharpest of all the many difficulties of my task has been to draw the line between history and biography—between the fortunes of the community and the exploits, thoughts, and purposes of the individual who had so marked a share in them. In the case of men of letters, in whose lives our literature is singularly rich, this difficulty, happily for their authors and for our delight, does not arise." [11] Morley was already an accomplished biographer of men of letters as well as statesmen, and he was able to make Gladstone the man stand out distinctly in his voluminous life of that eminent Victorian. Not nearly so successful was Hallam Tennyson in the life of his father. *Alfred Lord Tennyson, a Memoir,* is a valuable repository of information about the poet from letters, conversation, and anecdote, with scant connecting narrative, but it gives us little of the unpoetic, everyday life of Tennyson. Victorian biographies, outside of Froude's much censured work, were not intimate; judged by more recent

[11] *The Life of Gladstone,* vol. I, p. 1.

standards, as they too often are, they are stiff with the draperies of propriety.

The two works just mentioned follow the Boswell-Lockhart tradition as to form. So do three other outstanding biographies: Allen's *Life and Letters of Phillips Brooks,* Francis Darwin's and Leonard Huxley's lives of their fathers, the two famous scientists. The life of the noted Boston preacher is certainly one of the few great American biographies, but like other life-and-letters narratives it is too long to get the wide reading it deserves. Phillips Brooks was one of the most human saints in the long list of illustrious churchmen who have figured in biography. His biographer, a theologian, by giving too much space to theological matters, has not thrown into proper relief his subject's fine humanity. In the abridged edition (1907), however, the picture of the man is made clearer by the elimination of much ecclesiastical matter. The lives of Charles Darwin and Thomas H. Huxley by their sons are the first elaborate biographies of men of science. While not so enchanting as Valery-Radot's briefer life of Pasteur, they are readable revelations of the personalities of two men who wrought as great a revolution in scientific thought as the beneficent Frenchman did in scientific practice.

So far in this historical sketch little has been said of autobiography apart from biography. The two are so interwoven that a discussion of biography as a form necessarily involves self-writing also. Autobiography, as we have seen, gets into most life-narratives through letters and journals. More generically considered it differs from biography proper chiefly in manner. There is less of formality about autobiographical composition and therefore less of method. It may almost be said that autobiography has no form; each writer of it reveals himself as he elects. Intimate self-expression is subject neither to the conventions of morals nor to the canons of good taste. As long as the writer interestingly exposes himself, it is enough. "If," said Mrs. Carlyle, "I might write my own biography from beginning to end, without reservation or false coloring—it would be an invaluable document for my countrywomen in more than one particular. But 'decency forbids!'" That was written in mid-Victorian England. Such a thing, in any age, as complete self-expression is, of course, rare. Commenting on Dr. Johnson's opinion that "every man's life should be best written by himself," Monsieur

Maurois[12] enumerates some causes "which tend to make autobiographical narrative inaccurate or false." Among these are actual forgetfulness, deliberate suppression, esthetic reconstruction, and regard for the feelings of others. Such limitations, preventing full and sincere expression in autobiography, make it extremely doubtful whether a man is himself his best biographer.

After all, an autobiography is only a fragment. It records a fraction of the individual life, frequently the earlier part. Moreover, it is often a suppressed fragment, for few of the older autobiographies were published during the lives of the writers. The impulse to compose a life-narrative often arises in the author's soul during a mental or spiritual crisis growing out of political, religious, or social changes about him. He yearns to restate or defend his beliefs, to stabilize himself in times of intellectual unrest by falling back in memory upon steadier days. Hence the memoirs, reminiscences, apologies, recollections, and other species of autobiographical writing. The feeling, moreover, that he must record only important things in his life results in over-emphasis and in omissions that make his work all the more fragmentary. But autobiography, though less complete, is superior to biography in psychological sureness. Only the man himself can uncover the secret motives and meditations of his life; and ordinarily he will do this more freely in a professed autobiography than in letters and journals. Autobiographical narration, being more concerned with the inner life than biography, may, and often does, resemble the analytic novel; an example of this is Butler's *The Way of All Flesh* which is an autobiography in the guise of fiction.

In English autobiography all these characteristics find illustration. Before Gibbon there were numerous political and religious memoirs, chronicles of outer events and confessions of spiritual experiences; and there was a smaller class of reminiscences largely made up of personal exploits, like Lord Herbert's and Sir Kenelm Digby's. The group of religious autobiographies is by far the largest of the several kinds. The Quakers contributed more than forty volumes of self-writing from the early seventeenth to the nineteenth century. Perhaps the best of these productions are George Fox's *Journal* and John Woolman's *Journal,* one of the seventeenth and the other of the eighteenth century, the first by the English founder of the

[12] *Aspects of Biography,* pp. 149–165.

sect and the second by the American Quaker who was a contemporary of Benjamin Franklin. Bunyan's *Grace Abounding* (1666) is another personal account of religious emotions and experiences, more intense than the Quaker journals and more exaggerated, for Bunyan had greater imagination than either Fox or Woolman. These religious autobiographies are records of many and varied adventures, some of them quite as romantic as those in secular life-stories; but most of them are monotonous outpourings of souls singularly obsessed with fanatical zeal, unrelieved by humor or fancy.

Gibbon and Franklin were the first writers of formal autobiography. After them the practice was common. The name "autobiography" was first used by Southey in 1809. The nineteenth century is rich in self-writing. There is a well-defined group by philosophers and scientists, from Huxley's brief autobiographical sketch to Spencer's two stout volumes about himself. Of this important group the *Autobiography of John Stuart Mill,* long a classic, is the most deserving of comment here. This thoughtful work is really the history of a mind through the crucial stages of its growth and achievement under the influence of other persons, among whom was the author's wife. It might well be called the "Education of John Stuart Mill," an "education" which was far more positive in its results than Henry Adams's in a later generation. Mill's book, because of its lucid style and the light it throws on his own and others' mental processes, is one of the memorable modern autobiographies. In another large group, more literary and esthetic, Ruskin's *Præterita,* Newman's *Apologia,* Trollope's *Autobiography,* and the painter Haydon's story of his life, are representative; while a dozen or so of friendly reminiscences, of which Carlyle's, Harriet Martineau's, and Mrs. Oliphant's are typical, indicate the fondness for self-expression among the Victorians. Earlier in the century such introspective works as Egerton Brydges' and John Galt's show the love of confession common among poets and prose-writers of the Romantic Revival. Besides this more formal life-writing in the last century there was much thinly-veiled autobiography in poetry and the novel.

During the first decade of the present century was born the passion for self-writing which is regnant today. The rage for autobiographical expression has been stronger in America than in Eng-

land. The successful man wants to tell in five hundred to a thousand pages how he became so; the immigrant would show that for the plucky and persistent individual his adopted country is the land of opportunity; the statesman or minister or doctor or actor chats pleasantly of remembered yesterdays. In England the type of autobiography shows such variations as Henry M. Stanley's, Mrs. Asquith's, and General Booth's; in America such divergent productions as Jacob Riis's *The Making of an American,* General Grant's *Personal Memoirs,* and *The Education of Henry Adams.* Throughout its long, uneven history, autobiography has shown greater variation of type than biography.

The twentieth century has witnessed an enormous output of biographical literature in several well-marked varieties. It is said that from 1900 to 1915 five hundred volumes of biography were annually published in England alone, and since then the rate of production has greatly increased both in England and in the United States. In popularity with the general reading public biography threatens the primacy of the novel; and, moreover, as already intimated, these two forms of literature show a tendency, commercially speaking, to effect a merger. There has long been an affinity between the two, and, except in the traditional, or standard, type of biography, it is not easy to keep truth and fiction apart. Pure biography of the Boswell-Lockhart kind continues its apostolic succession, so to speak, in the old life-and-letters heritage; applied biography of the commemorative brand flourishes as of yore. These two species still constitute the large, substantial part of biographical production. In form and manner they combine history with literature. But there have arisen several essentially different types of biography which in method and expression show the influence of the new scientific spirit that has notably modified both history and literature. Before considering the "new biography," as the several species are collectively called, it will be well to ask and briefly answer the question, when and why did the change in biographical writing take place?

Early in the present century Gamaliel Bradford, of Boston, published several volumes of biographical portraits, or studies, which have been followed by many other short and long psychological life-sketches of famous men and women. These are different in manner from the literary portraiture of Walter Pater and Sainte-

Beuve in the preceding century; they are more like the sort of analytical portrayal which Strachey did a little later. Bradford, as one of the makers of the new biography, will soon be discussed; he is mentioned here as a forerunner of an important phase of it. About the same time was published Samuel Butler's *The Way of All Flesh* (1903), written twenty years before, an autobiographical novel satirizing the author's parents and their puritanical repressions. A few years afterwards appeared Edmund Gosse's *Father and Son* (1907), an autobiographical study of parental character, "the record," says the author, "of a struggle between two temperaments, two consciences, and almost two epochs." He characterizes it as "a genuine slice of life," a document significant "as the diagnosis of a dying Puritanism." The book covers the first twenty-one years of the writer's life, after which father and son no longer "spoke the same language" nor "encompassed the same hopes" though neither ceased to respect the other. The sincerity of the narrative and the touches of mildly ironical humor make *Father and Son* a great spiritual autobiography. What Gosse and the other life-writers of the early century were saying, directly or indirectly, was that thenceforth reality, so long hidden under the mask of propriety, should be the cardinal quality of biography. By 1918, when Strachey's *Eminent Victorians* appeared, biography had definitely acquired a different mode of expression.

The intellectual outlook of the first twenty years of the present century, the fraction of it covered in this sketch, was very unlike that of the old. By the end of those two decades a revolution had been wrought in men's thinking. Through discovery, scientific experimentation, and the horrors of war, the external and internal life of multitudes had undergone a transformation. There was a spirit of free inquiry abroad that threatened traditional beliefs, time-honored customs, and ancient sanctions. Standards dissolved in the general flux of things, and moral laws became mere ethical conventions based on social expediency. The new psychology, more inductive than the old, joined with biology and physics in demonstrating the complexity of the individual and the perpetual motion of his sentient life. The ancient clearcut categories of good and evil were no longer absolute, but relative. The skeptical spirit of the time insisted on proving all things by a thoroughgoing process of elimination and selection. This severe scientific scrutiny of human

beings had a profound effect upon life-writing and fiction. Emphasis in the novel as well as in biography was shifted from outward events to the inner processes of causation. Character analysis became dominant in biographical writing. Type-characters disappeared before this devastating induction, and the individual was pitilessly and impartially exposed to the reader. This is, in general, the method of the several species of the new biography which we may now proceed to examine.

The newer biography may, for convenience of classification, be roughly divided into three groups which often overlap. There is one fairly well-defined class of interpretative, or portrait, biographies, in the psycho-analytic manner; another, less sharply determined, of humanizing, or "debunking," biographies, which amend earlier portraiture; and a third, professedly scientific, in which the individual is examined according to laboratory methods. The first of these classes merits more consideration than the other two. Interpretative biography finds its best illustration in the writings of Gamaliel Bradford and Lytton Strachey. The American biographer has given the name "psychography" to his own method, which is the painting of an individual soul. After long reflection on his material, with which he has become thoroughly familiar by much reading, he selects only those essential features that may be combined into a picture of enduring interest. Perspective, proportion, and climax are keynote words in the process. Psychological portrait-painting aptly characterizes this species of life-writing which invests mere facts with spiritual significance. In the titles of Bradford's many works the two oft-recurring words are "portraits" and "souls": *American Portraits, Portraits of Women, Damaged Souls, Bare Souls.* More elaborate and less subjective than this kind of interpretative biography is the work of Lytton Strachey, whose *Eminent Victorians, Queen Victoria,* and *Elizabeth and Essex* are known to all. Strachey does not discuss the outward events in a period of a lifetime except in so far as they may help to reveal the personality he is presenting. His materials are rigidly winnowed. Such as he needs to sustain his statements he refers to in footnotes. He is evidently acquainted with all available sources of information, but he does not seek to add to the facts already well known; he is no discoverer of documents. Out of the old documents—journals, memoirs, letters—he develops a new technique, artistically creates a

different man or woman from the accepted and confidently settled one. Thus a historical figure is officially set free, examined, and estimated also as a human being, and the essential character disclosed. Four eminent Victorians—churchman, woman philanthropist, educator, warrior—are featured anew so that one salient trait, before obscured, remains in the reader's mental picture.

Strachey's *Queen Victoria* (1921), the appearance of which signalized the triumph of the new biography, won instant and almost universal praise. It is constructed according to no traditional formula. Subordinating public affairs and outward happenings, Strachey turns his psychological searchlight upon the Queen and half a dozen minor characters who are there for our better understanding of the central personality. The book, dedicated to a novelist, is more like a novel than a history. The eighty years of Victoria are related in ten chapters, half of which have personal titles, covering a little over four hundred pages. Compare this with Lockhart's and Froude's voluminous biographies, if you would have a lesson in elimination of raw material. *Queen Victoria* is a portrait sketched by a literary artist of ironic temper in a spirit of detachment. Scientifically considered, it is the study of a temperament. The manner, mildly satirical, is more French than English, more like Voltaire's than Morley's. A suggestion of Strachey's style may be discovered fitfully in Froude and more than an occasional resemblance in Morley, but the latter two did biography after an older fashion. Numerous imitators have so far essayed in vain to achieve the magic art of Strachey in delineating personality.

Strachey's Victoria may not be a true likeness, but it bears all the earmarks of vivid probability. The good queen's limitations, such as her small imagination and primitive sense of humor, her lack of interest and understanding about scientific and literary movements of her time, her hostility to political reform, her interference with her ministers, and her exaggerated views of royal prerogative and parental authority, are all in Strachey's picture; and so are her many virtues, which are, or were, better known than her limitations. That she dominated her age more as a symbol than as an individual was doubtless even then evident to the discerning, and that is manifest in Strachey's portraiture. What must ever make the reader of interpretative biography distrustful of its faithfulness in details is the use of the fiction-writer's method of reading minds.

Thus, when Victoria is dying, Strachey recites at some length, very beautifully, what was "probably" passing in retrospect before her mental eyes. This is, of course, just what the psychological novelist loves to do for his hero or heroine and is sheer fiction. But this imaginative filling out of a portrait, essential to lifelike portrayal, is as unavoidable in literary biography as it is in the kindred art of prose fiction. The older biography by including everything generally produced a blurred picture, while the new, severely selective, at least enables the reader to get a clear image.

Another kind of popular biography is the corrective, which assumes to present a more human, and consequently a more faithful, portrayal. Such life-writing professes to paint a wholly truthful portrait by including material either unknown to previous biographers or wilfully omitted by them. Bearing the appealing title of "The True Franklin" or "The True Washington" or "The True Stevenson," the work is published, and we are assured that at last we know the man as he actually was. But do we? Most corrective biographies belittle their subject, not by including everything but by excluding important matters in order to magnify a weakness, to convert a peccadillo into an unpardonable sin. After all, it is still with the biographer a question of selection. He may choose the salacious aspects of a man's life and falsify the story as much as if he had piously recorded only his virtues. Humanizing biographies represent a reaction from the panegyric type on which the generations have been surfeited. A democratic age, moreover, resents heroes, and insists on the leveling of eminent men with average men, at least in their human failings. The craving for sensational fiction has also stimulated a taste for sensational biography. The respectable lives of famous worthies are done over into scandalous exposures of their delinquencies; or, what is almost as unfortunate in the total evaluation, emphasis is so placed that truth is sacrificed. The humanizing biography errs, not so much in failing to tell the truth as in stressing, or featuring, minor phases of it.

Oliver Cromwell's injunction to Sir Peter Lely to paint him, warts and all, is good for biographers too. The faults, the weaknesses of a life should appear along with the virtues in the larger integration. Such pervading truthfulness differentiates pure biography from panegyric, on the one hand, and detraction, on the other, from overstatement and from understatement. "The value of every

story," said Dr. Johnson, "depends on its being true. A story is a picture either of an individual, or of human nature in general; if it be false, it is a picture of nothing." Whitman's friend and biographer, Traubel, has recorded the following conversation:

> Whitman said to me tonight again as he has before:
>
> "Some day you will be writing about me: be sure to write about me honest: whatever you do, do not prettify me: include all the hells and damns." Adding: "I have hated so much of the biography in literature because it is so untrue: look at our national figures how they are spoilt by liars, by the people who think they can improve on God Almighty's work —who put on an extra touch here, there, here again, there again, until the real man is no longer recognizable."

It has been remarked that the older biographer was obsessed with the idea of goodness; it may almost be said that the twentieth-century biographer is, like the medieval theologian, dominated by the idea of original sin. Between the postulates of philosophy and the mandates of science the modern man, however virtuous, is hardly in danger of excessive laudation from his biographer.

The scientific biographer is a dissector, not a painter of souls. He is a literary psychiatrist who prefers to find his man sick in body or in mind. Since the Freudians began assembling their "complexes," life-writing has enlarged its boundaries by the inclusion of the laboratory. From psychoanalysis to pathology was but a step. The theories of Havelock Ellis, of Freud, of Lombroso, of Galton, have already affected the methods of biography, not so much in England and America, perhaps, as on the continent of Europe. Before these theories became well known, there were already clinical biographies, studies of geniuses in literature afflicted with disease to which the extraordinary beauty of their poetry or prose was attributed. The opium-eating of DeQuincey and of Coleridge, the tuberculosis of Keats and Lanier, the dissipation of Poe, the neurosis of these and other highly sensitized souls, have all been diagnosed and tabulated. Thesis-biographies about suppressions and repressions of genius have been written. America's greatest humorist, for instance, was, says Van Wyck Brooks, our foremost suppressed satirist. Then came the more strictly scientific studies of characters abnormally introspective because of gland-derangement or abortive secretions. Applica-

tions of discoveries in heredity resulted in a dual division of mankind into introverts and extraverts, which is becoming technical and highly specialized. Biography tends, under the influence of philosophy and science, to become a form of applied psychology. In the general biographical stream, however, this is but a small current. Biography, once the handmaiden of history and now the fitful playmate of science, continues in the main to flourish in the pleasant fields of letters.

That is to say, biography is not a science but an art. Literature is an art and so is history. And life-writing, as this sketch of its progress has shown, is both history and literature. Whenever philosophy invades the realm of literature, it is disastrous to pure literature; for literature reveals life while philosophy seeks to explain life, and explanation kills the beauty of revelation. So in biography, which is the revelation of an individual life, the philosophizing process is deadly. If the biographer has a theory to explain his man's failures or successes, the human being is likely to get lost in the "problem" posed. Critical scholarship, which is essentially scientific, has not produced the great biographies. Consider, for instance, Masson's learned life of Milton, invaluable for the student because of the exhaustive treatment of his works; but can one get from it any clear picture of Milton? The art of biography resembles that of painting; as the portrait painter interprets his subject to the eye, so the life-writer must make the reader mentally see and understand the individual whom he has set himself the task of revealing rather than explaining. A collection of facts in a book is not a biography, is not history, is not literature. The art of these is the relating of the facts to a human life or to a period, facts touched by imagination and emotion. Science deals with facts inductively illustrating theories, but the scientist's method is quite different from the painter's and the biographer's manner of constructing a human likeness. Modern biographies, therefore, which claim to be "scientific" do not fall within the legitimate field of life-writing already considered and from which the selections in this volume have been taken. The so-called scientific biography of the twentieth century is technical and specialized. Although interesting and instructive, as a whole it is so lacking in beauty of form and expression as to lie without the pale of either history or literature.

It is the style, indeed, that gets a biography read and wins for it

a permanent place in literature. The way in which they clothe their facts has made Bradford and Strachey popular and lasting with intelligent readers. So it was with Boswell and Gibbon and Southey and Carlyle and Henry Adams. Those who have succeeded best in life-writing have shown a winsome artistry of phrasing that is akin to the style of poetry, prose fiction, and drama. Facts transfigured by literary art make great biography. Hence we find, in reviewing the vast and varied field of English biography, that hardly more than a score of life-narratives are really memorable. How much of the new biography, spawned in such profusion, will be read fifty or a hundred years later, must depend quite as much upon its style as upon its truthfulness. Those interpretative stories of human life that are touched with beauty, whether scientifically accurate or not, will be found among the classics; those wanting this touch, however true to the facts, will perish with the generation that gave them birth, will fall and be lost in that limbo between literature and science in which many able and well documented theses dustily repose. Earlier biographies, like Roper's *More,* Cavendish's *Wolsey,* and even Walton's *Lives,* though incomplete portraits, have, in spite of their limitations, escaped utter oblivion because of redeeming charms of style. The new biography, though perhaps more accurate than the old, will also be saved by its art or not at all.

The development of English life-writing has now been traced from hagiography, or saints' lives, to psychography, or the painting of a soul. It has been shown that not until the middle of the sixteenth century was there any conscious art of personal portrayal as distinct from the historical method of narrating individual lives. Accounts of churchmen and statesmen formed the staple of biography which, until the eighteenth century, was mostly panegyric. We have seen that Walton, about the middle of the seventeenth century, was the first biographer who deliberately composed and published in his own lifetime the lives of eminent men in church and state. By the end of that century numerous memoirs and miniature biographies had been written, and criticism of the writing of "particular lives," begun by Bacon in his *Advancement of Learning,* was elaborated by Dryden in his preface to Plutarch near the end of the century. His introduction of the term "biography" indicated the growing popularity of life-writing. With the character-sketches and the novels of the first half of the eighteenth century it has been

noted that biography became more artistic, allying itself in form and spirit with literature. With Mason, in the latter half of the century, the letter became a significant feature of life-writing and has remained so ever since; and with Johnson literary criticism for the first time formally entered biography. Out of literary criticism grew the art of interpretation which was later to become an essential element of life-writing.

With James Boswell the art of biography attained such high excellence that all subsequent practitioners of that vital craft have been his debtors. Throughout the generations since he achieved distinction with the life-and-letters biography, that has been the prevailing type. Later biographers, for obvious reasons, have reproduced less of the conversation of their subjects than is found in Boswell's book, and some of them have made freer use of journals and letters. The climax of this autobiographical inclusion was reached in Froude, who was no less a realist than his great precursor in the art of personal revelation. In the nineteenth century, as we have seen, the stream of English biography drew into its wide current poets, novelists, journalists, educators, churchmen, dramatists, philosophers, and scientists. The biography of the Victorian and Georgian periods shows an immense variety of subjects and a growing diversity of species. From Roper and Cavendish to Bradford and Strachey stretch more than four centuries of individual portraiture, which, if collected into a strictly biographical library, would form the world's most impressive contribution to the literature of personality. It is a vast picture gallery of worthies whose names, written out in chronological order, would symbolize the moral, political, and intellectual achievements of the English-speaking race.

Selections From Representative Biographies

THE SIXTEENTH AND SEVENTEENTH CENTURIES

Cavendish's "Life of Wolsey"

GEORGE CAVENDISH, the biographer of Cardinal Wolsey, was born in Suffolk, the native county of Thomas Wolsey, about 1500. He became the great man's "gentleman usher," or chief court attendant, in 1526 or 1527, and was steadily with him to the end. After Wolsey's death in 1530 Cavendish retired to his own estate where he spent the rest of his life in peace. He wrote the life of his master sometime before 1557, nearly thirty years after the scenes he describes, when in the quiet of retirement he could reflect upon the troubled times and the vanished glories of greatness. His book was first published in 1641, though it had circulated in manuscript form in many copies. Shakespeare may have read one of them, for his play *Henry VIII* contains lines very like certain sentences in Cavendish. Over a dozen manuscript copies of the biography are in existence and various editions were printed in the seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth centuries. The author's political and religious views, expressed or implied in his comments on Wolsey's fortunes and misfortunes, might not be printed during the lifetime of Queen Elizabeth. Cavendish sets forth in the "prologue" to his book his reasons for writing it: "The occasion therefore that maketh me to rehearse all these things is this; for as much as I intend, God willing, to write here some part of the proceedings of Legate and Cardinal Wolsey, Archbishop of York, and of his ascending and descending from honorous estate; whereof some part shall be of mine own knowledge, and some of other persons' information. Forsooth this cardinal was my lord and master, whom in his life I served, and so remained with him after his fall, continually, during the term of all his trouble, until he died; as well in the south as in the north parts, and noted all his demeanor and usage in all that time; as also in his wealthy

triumph and glorious estate." At the conclusion he states the moral of his story thus: "Who list to read and consider, with an indifferent eye, this history, may behold the wondrous mutability of vain honours, the brittle assurance of abundance; the uncertainty of dignities, the flattering of feigned friends, and the tickle trust to worldly princes." This life of Wolsey, who rose from humble origin to high political and religious station from which he fell "like Lucifer, never to hope again," is written with such charm that it has been called the first artistic biography in English literature.

[The standard edition of Cavendish's *Life and Death of Cardinal Wolsey* is Singer's, 1825. Modern editions are Morley's and the Temple Classics. The spelling has been modernized.]

THE ARREST AND DEATH OF CARDINAL WOLSEY

Or ever I wade any further in this matter, I do intend to declare unto you what chanced him before this his last trouble at Cawood,[1] as a sign or token given by God what should follow of his end, or of trouble which did shortly ensue, the sequel whereof was of no man then present either premeditated or imagined. Therefore, forasmuch as it is a notable thing to be considered, I will (God willing) declare it as truly as it chanced according to my simple remembrance, at the which I myself was present.

My lord's accustomed enemies in the court about the king had now my lord in more doubt than they had before his fall, considering the continual favour that the king bare him, thought that at length the king might call him home again; and if he so did, they supposed that he would rather imagine against them than to remit or forget their cruelty, which they most unjustly imagined against him. Wherefore they compassed in their heads that they would either by some means dispatch him by some sinister accusation of treason, or to bring him into the king's indignation by some other ways. This was their daily imagination and study, having as many spials, and as many eyes to attend upon his doings as the poets feigned Argus to have; so that he could neither work nor do anything, but that his enemies had knowledge thereof shortly after. Now at the last, they espied a time wherein they caught an occasion to bring their purpose to pass, thinking thereby to have of him a great advantage; for the matter being once disclosed unto the king, in such a vehemency as they proposed, they thought the king would be moved against him with great displeasure. And that by them executed and done, the king, upon their information, thought it good that he should come up to stand to his trial; which they liked nothing at all; notwithstanding he was sent for after this sort. First, they devised that he should come up upon arrest in ward, which they knew right well would so sore grieve him that he might be the weaker to come into the king's presence to make answer. Wherefore they sent Sir

[1] Cawood Castle, a favorite residence of Cardinal Wolsey, was near York.

Walter Walshe, knight, one of the gentlemen of the king's privy chamber, down into the country unto the Earl of Northumberland (who was brought up in my lord's house), and they twain being in commission jointly to arrest my lord of hault [2] treason. This conclusion fully resolved, they caused Master Walshe to prepare himself to this journey with this commission, and certain instructions annexed to the same; who made him ready to ride, and took his horse at the court gate about one of the clock at noon, upon All-hallown day, toward the north. Now am I come to the place where I will declare the thing that I promised you before of a certain token of my lord's trouble; which was this.

My lord sitting at dinner upon All-hallown day, in Cawood Castle, having at his board's end divers of his most worthiest chaplains, sitting at dinner to keep him company, for lack of strangers, ye shall understand, that my lord's great cross of silver accustomably stood in the corner, at the table's end, leaning against the tappet or hanging of the chamber. And when the table's end was taken up, and a convenient time for them to arise; in arising from the table, one Doctor Augustine, physician, being a Venetian born, having a boisterous gown of black velvet upon him, as he would have come out at the table's end, his gown overthrew the cross that stood there in the corner, and the cross trailing down along the tappet, it chanced to fall upon Doctor Bonner's head, who stood among others by the tappet, making of curtsy to my lord, and with one of the points of the cross razed his head a little, that the blood ran down. The company standing there were greatly astonied with the chance. My lord sitting in his chair, looking upon them, perceiving the chance, demanded of me being next him, what the matter meant of their sudden abashment. I showed him how the cross fell upon Doctor Bonner's head. "Hath it," quoth he, "drawn any blood?" "Yea forsooth, my lord," quoth I, "as it seemeth me." With that he cast down his head, looking very soberly upon me a good while without any word speaking; at the last quoth he (shaking his head), *"malum omen;"* and therewith said grace, and rose from the table, and went into his bedchamber, there lamenting, making his prayers. Now mark the signification, how my lord expounded this matter unto me afterward at Pomfret Abbey. First, ye shall understand, that the cross, which belonged to the dignity of York, he understood

[2] *Hault* is older French for *haut*, high.

to be himself; and Augustine, that overthrew the cross, he understood to be he that should accuse him, by means whereof he should be overthrown. The falling upon Master Bonner's head, who was master of my lord's faculties and spiritual jurisdictions, who was damnified by the overthrowing of the cross by the physician, and the drawing of blood betokened death, which shortly after came to pass; about the very same time of the day of this mischance, Master Walshe took his horse at the court gate, as nigh as it could be judged. And thus my lord took it for a very sign or token of that which after ensued, if the circumstance be equally considered and noted, although no man was there present at that time that had any knowledge of Master Walshe's coming down, or what should follow. Wherefore, as it was supposed, that God showed him more secret knowledge of his latter days and end of his trouble than all men supposed; which appeared right well by divers talks that he had with me at divers times of his last end. And now that I have declared unto you the effect of this prodigy and sign, I will return again to my matter.

The time drawing nigh of his stallation; sitting at dinner, upon the Friday next before Monday on the which he intended to be stalled at York, the Earl of Northumberland and Master Walshe, with a great company of gentlemen, as well of the earl's servants as of the country, which he had gathered together to accompany him in the king's name, not knowing of what purpose or what intent, came into the hall at Cawood, the officers sitting at dinner, and my lord not fully dined, but being at his fruits, nothing knowing of the earl's being in his hall. The first thing that the earl did, after he came into the castle, he commanded the porter to deliver him the keys of the gates, who would in no wise deliver him the keys, although he were very roughly commanded in the king's name, to deliver them to one of the earl's servants. Saying unto the earl, "Sir, ye do intend to deliver them to one of your servants to keep them and the gates, and to plant another in my room; I know no cause why ye should so do, and this I assure you that you have no one servant, but that I am as able to keep them as he, to what purpose soever it be. And also, the keys were delivered me by my lord my master, with a charge both by oath, and by other precepts and commandments. Therefore I beseech your lordship to pardon me, though I refuse your commandment. For whatsoever ye shall command me to do

that belongeth to my office, I shall do it with a right good will as justly as any other of your servants." With that quoth the gentlemen there present unto the earl, hearing him speak so stoutly like a man, and with so good reason: "Sir," quoth they, "he is a good fellow, and speaketh like a faithful servant to his master; and like an honest man: therefore give him your charge, and let him keep still the gates: who, we doubt not, will be obedient to your lordship's commandment." "Well then," quoth the earl, "hold him a book," and commanded him to lay his hand upon the book, whereat the porter made some doubt, but being persuaded by the gentlemen there present, was contented, and laid his hand upon the book, to whom, quoth the earl, "Thou shalt swear, to keep well and truly these gates to the king our sovereign lord's use, and to do all such things as we shall command thee in the king's name, being his highness's commissioners, and as it shall seem to us at all times good, as long as we shall be here in this castle; and that ye shall not let in nor out at these gates, but such as ye shall be commanded by us, from time to time," and upon this oath he received the keys at the earl's and Master Walshe's hands.

Of all these doings knew my lord nothing; for they stopped the stairs that went up to my lord's chamber where he sat, so that no man could pass up again that was come down. At the last one of my lord's servants chanced to look down into the hall at a loop that was upon the stairs, and returned to my lord, and showed him that my Lord of Northumberland was in the hall; whereat my lord marvelled, and would not believe him at the first; but commanded a gentleman, being his gentleman usher, to go down and bring him perfect word. Who going down the stairs, looking down at the loop, where he saw the earl, who then returned to my lord, and showed him that it was very he. "Then," quoth my lord, "I am sorry that we have dined, for I fear that our officers be not stored of any plenty of good fish, to make him such honourable cheer as to his estate is convenient, notwithstanding he shall have such as we have, with a right good will and loving heart. Let the table be standing still, and we will go down and meet him, and bring him up; and then he shall see how far forth we be at our dinner." With that he put the table from him, and rose up; going down he encountered the earl upon the midst of the stairs, coming up, with all his men about him. And as soon as my lord espied the earl, he put

off his cap, and said to him, "My lord, ye be most heartily welcome; (and therewith they embraced each other). Although, my lord," quoth he, "that I have often desired, and wished in my heart to see you in my house, yet if ye had loved me as I do you, ye would have sent me word before of your coming, to the intent that I might have received you according to your honour and mine. Notwithstanding ye shall have such cheer as I am able to make you, with a right good will; trusting that ye will accept the same of me as of your very old and loving friend, hoping hereafter to see you oftener, when I shall be more able and better provided to receive you with better fare." And then my lord took the Earl of Northumberland by the hand, and led him up into the chamber; whom followed all the earl's servants; where the table stood in the state that my lord left it when he rose; saying unto the earl, "Sir, now ye may perceive how far forth we were at our dinner." Then my lord led the earl to the fire, saying, "My Lord, ye shall go into my bedchamber, where is a good fire made for you, and there ye may shift your apparel until your chamber be made ready. Therefore let your male [3] be brought up: and or ever I go, I pray you give me leave to take these gentlemen, your servants, by the hands." And when he had taken them all by the hands, he returned to the earl, and said, "Ah, my lord, I perceive well that ye have observed my old precepts and instruction which I gave you, when you were abiding with me in your youth, which was, to cherish your father's old servants, whereof I see here present with you a great number. Surely, my lord, ye do therein very well and nobly, and like a wise gentleman. For these be they that will not only serve and love you, but they will also live and die with you, and be true and faithful servants to you, and glad to see you prosper in honour; the which I beseech God to send you, with long life." This said, he took the earl by the hand, and led him into his bedchamber. And they being there all alone, save only I, that kept the door, according to my duty, being gentleman usher; these two lords standing at a window by the chimney, in my lord's bedchamber, the earl trembling said, with a very faint and soft voice, unto my lord (laying his hand upon his arm), "My lord, I arrest you of high treason." . . .

And the next day he took his journey with Master Kingston and the guard. And as soon as they espied their old master, in such a

[3] Bag, portmanteau.

lamentable estate, they lamented him with weeping eyes. Whom my lord took by the hands, and divers times, by the way, as he rode, he would talk with them, sometimes with one, and sometimes with another; at night he was lodged at a house of the Earl of Shrewsbury's, called Hardwick Hall, very ill at ease. The next day he rode to Nottingham, and there lodged that night, more sicker, and the next day we rode to Leicester Abbey; and by the way he waxed so sick that he was divers times likely to have fallen from his mule, and being night before we came to the Abbey of Leicester, where at his coming in at the gates the abbot of the place with all his convent met him with the light of many torches; whom they right honourably received with great reverence. To whom my lord said, "Father Abbot, I am come hither to leave my bones among you," whom they brought on his mule to the stairs foot of his chamber, and there alighted, and Master Kingston then took him by the arm, and led him up the stairs; who told me afterwards that he never carried so heavy a burden in all his life. And as soon as he was in his chamber, he went incontinent to his bed, very sick. This was upon Saturday at night; and there he continued sicker and sicker.

Upon Monday in the morning, as I stood by his bedside, about eight of the clock, the windows being close shut, having wax lights burning upon the cupboard, I beheld him, as me seemed, drawing fast to his end. He perceiving my shadow upon the wall by his bedside, asked who was there? "Sir, I am here," quoth I. "How do you?" quoth he to me. "Very well, Sir," quoth I, "if I might see your Grace well." "What is it of the clock?" said he to me. "Forsooth, Sir," said I, "it is past eight of the clock in the morning." "Eight of the clock?" quoth he, "that cannot be," rehearsing divers times, "eight of the clock, eight of the clock, nay, nay," quoth he at the last, "it cannot be eight of the clock: for by eight of the clock ye shall lose your master: for my time draweth near that I must depart out of this world." With that Master Doctor Palmes, a worshipful gentleman, being his chaplain and ghostly father, standing by, bade me secretly demand of him if he would be shriven, and to be in a readiness towards God, whatsoever should chance. At whose desire I asked him that question. "What have you to do to ask me any such question?" quoth he, and began to be very angry with me for my presumption; until at the last Master Doctor took my part, and talked with him in Latin, and so pacified him.

And after dinner, Master Kingston sent for me into his chamber, and at my being there, said to me, "So it is, that the king hath sent me letters by this gentleman Master Vincent, one of your old companions, who hath been of late in trouble in the Tower of London for money that my lord should have at his last departing from him, which now cannot be found. Wherefore the king, at this gentleman's request, for the declaration of his truth hath sent him hither with his Grace's letters directed unto me, commanding me by virtue thereof to examine my lord in that behalf, and to have your counsel herein, how it may be done, that he may take it well and in good part. This is the chief cause of my sending for you; therefore I pray you what is your best counsel to use in this matter for the true acquittal of this gentleman?" "Sir," quoth I, "as touching that matter, my simple advice shall be this, that your own person shall resort unto him and visit him, and in communication break the matter unto him; and if he will not tell the truth, there be that can satisfy the king's pleasure therein; and in any wise speak nothing of my fellow Vincent. And I would not advise you to tract the time with him; for he is very sick, and I fear me he will not live past to-morrow in the morning." Then went Master Kingston unto him; and asked first how he did, and so forth proceeded in communication, wherein Master Kingston demanded of him the said money, saying, "that my lord of Northumberland hath found a book at Cawood that reporteth how ye had but late fifteen hundred pounds in ready money, and one penny thereof will not be found, who hath made the king privy by his letters thereof. Wherefore the king hath written unto me, to demand of you if you know where it is become; for it were pity that it should be embezzled from you both. Therefore I shall require you, in the king's name, to tell me the truth herein, to the intent that I may make just report unto his majesty what answer ye make therein." With that my lord paused a while and said, "Ah, good Lord! how much doth it grieve me that the king should think in me such deceit, wherein I should deceive him of any one penny that I have. Rather than I would, Master Kingston, embezzle, or deceive him of a mite, I would it were moult, and put in my mouth"; which words he spake twice or thrice very vehemently. "I have nothing, nor never had (God being my judge), that I esteemed, or had it in any such delight or pleasure, but that I took it for the king's goods, having but the bare use of the same

during my life, and after my death to leave it to the king; wherein he hath but prevented my intent and purpose. And for this money that ye demand of me, I assure you it is none of mine; for I borrowed it of divers of my friends to bury me, and to bestow among my servants, who have taken great pains about me, like true and faithful men. Notwithstanding if it be his pleasure to take this money from me I must hold me therewith content. Yet I would most humbly beseech his majesty to see them satisfied, of whom I borrowed the same for the discharge of my conscience." "Who be they?" quoth Master Kingston. "That shall I show you," said my lord. "I borrowed two hundred pounds thereof of Sir John Allen of London; and two hundred pounds of Sir Richard Gresham; and two hundred pounds of the Master of the Savoy; and two hundred pounds of Doctor Hickden, dean of my college in Oxford; and two hundred pounds of the treasurer of the church of York; and two hundred pounds of the dean of York; and two hundred pounds of parson Ellis my chaplain; and a hundred pounds of my steward, whose name I have forgotten; trusting that the king will restore them again their money, for it is none of mine." "Sir," quoth Master Kingston, "there is no doubt in the king; ye need not to mistrust that, but when the king shall be advertised thereof, to whom I shall make report of your request, that his Grace will do as shall become him. But, Sir, I pray you, where is this money?" "Master Kingston," quoth he, "I will not conceal it from the king; I will declare it to you, or I die, by the grace of God. Take a little patience with me, I pray you." "Well, Sir, then will I trouble you no more at this time, trusting that ye will show me to-morrow." "Yea, that I will, Master Kingston, for the money is safe enough, and in an honest man's keeping; who will not keep one penny from the king." And then Master Kingston went to his chamber to supper. Howbeit my lord waxed very sick, most likeliest to die that night, and often swooned, and as me thought drew fast toward his end, until it was four of the clock in the morning, at which time I asked him how he did. "Well," quoth he, "if I had any meat; I pray you give me some." "Sir, there is none ready," said I. "I wish," quoth he, "ye be the more to blame, for you should have always some meat for me in a readiness, to eat when my stomach serveth me; therefore I pray you get me some; for I intend this day, God willing, to make me strong, to the intent I may occupy myself in confession,

and make me ready to God." "Then, Sir," quoth I, "I will call up the cook to provide some meat for you; and will also, if it be your pleasure, call for Master Palmes, that ye may commune with him, until your meat be ready." "With a good will," quoth he. And therewith I went first, and called up the cook, commanding him to prepare some meat for my lord; and then I went to Master Palmes and told him what case my lord was in; willing him to rise, and to resort to him with speed. And then I went to Master Kingston; and gave him warning, that, as I thought, he would not live; advertising him that if he had any thing to say to him, that he should make haste, for he was in great danger. "In good faith," quoth Master Kingston, "ye be to blame: for ye make him believe that he is sicker, and in more danger than he is." "Well, Sir," quoth I, "ye shall not say another day but that I gave you warning, as I am bound to do, in discharge of my duty. Therefore, I pray you, whatsoever shall chance, let no negligence be ascribed to me herein; for I assure you his life is very short. Do therefore now as ye think best." Yet nevertheless he arose, and made him ready, and came to him. After he had eaten of a cullis made of a chicken, a spoonful or two, at the last quoth he, "Whereof was this cullis made?" "Forsooth, Sir," quoth I, "of a chicken." "Why," quoth he, "it is fasting day, and St. Andrew's Eve." "What though it be, Sir," quoth Doctor Palmes, "ye be excused by reason of your sickness." "Yea," quoth he, "what though? I will eat no more."

Then was he in confession the space of an hour. And when he had ended his confession, Master Kingston bade him good-morrow (for it was about seven of the clock in the morning); and asked him how he did. "Sir," quoth he, "I tarry but the will and pleasure of God, to render unto him my simple soul into his divine hands." "Not yet so, Sir," quoth Master Kingston, "with the grace of God, ye shall live, and do very well, if ye will be of good cheer." "Master Kingston, my disease is such that I cannot live, I have had some experience in my disease, and thus it is: I have a flux with a continual fever; the nature whereof is this, that if there be no alteration with me of the same within eight days, then must either ensue excoriation of the entrails, or frenzy, or else present death, and the best thereof is death. And, as I suppose, this is the eighth day: and if ye see in me no alteration, then is there no remedy (although I may live a day or twain), but death, which is the best remedy of the

three." "Nay, Sir, in good faith," quoth Master Kingston, "you be in such dolor and pensiveness, doubting that thing that indeed ye need not to fear, which maketh you much worse than ye should be." "Well, well, Master Kingston," quoth he, "I see the matter against me how it is framed; but if I had served God as diligently as I have done the king, he would not have given me over in my grey hairs. Howbeit this is the just reward that I must receive for my worldly diligence and pains that I have had to do him service; only to satisfy his vain pleasure, not regarding my godly duty. Wherefore, I pray you, with all my heart, to have me most humbly commended unto his royal majesty; beseeching him in my behalf to call to his most gracious remembrance all matters proceeding between him and me from the beginning of the world unto this day, and the progress of the same: and most chiefly in the weighty matter yet depending (meaning the matter newly began between him and good Queen Katherine); then shall his conscience declare, whether I have offended him or no. He is sure a prince of a royal courage, and hath a princely heart; and rather than he will either miss or want any part of his will or appetite, he will put the loss of one half of his realm in danger. For I assure you I have often kneeled before him in his privy chamber on my knees, the space of an hour or two, to persuade him from his will and appetite: but I could never bring to pass to dissuade him therefrom. Therefore, Master Kingston, if it chance hereafter you to be one of his privy council, as for your wisdom and other qualities ye are meet to be, I warn you to be well advised and assured what matter ye put in his head, for ye shall never put it out again." . .

"Master Kingston, farewell. I can no more, but wish all things to have good success. My time draweth on fast. I may not tarry with you. And forget not, I pray you, what I have said and charged you withal: for when I am dead, ye shall peradventure remember my words much better." And even with these words he began to draw his speech at length, and his tongue to fail; his eyes being set in his head, whose sight failed him. Then we began to put him in remembrance of Christ's passion; and sent for the abbot of the place to anneal [4] him, who came with all speed, and ministered unto him all the service to the same belonging; and caused also the guard to stand by, both to hear him talk before his death, and also to

[4] *To anneal* is to administer extreme unction.

witness of the same; and incontinent the clock struck eight, at which time he gave up the ghost, and thus departed he this present life. And calling to our remembrance his words, the day before, how he said that at eight of the clock we should lose our master, one of us looking upon another, supposing that he prophesied of his departure.

Here is the end and fall of pride and arrogancy of such men, exalted by fortune to honours and high dignities; for I assure you, in his time of authority and glory, he was the haughtiest man in all his proceedings that then lived, having more respect to the worldly honour of his person than he had to his spiritual profession; wherein should be all meekness, humility, and charity; the process wherof I leave to them that be learned and seen in divine laws.

The Autobiography of Lord Herbert of Cherbury

EDWARD, Lord Herbert of Cherbury (1583–1648), philosopher, historian, poet, and diplomatist, was a member of the noble family of Herberts at Eyton, Shropshire, and brother of the poet George Herbert. Educated at Oxford, he early gave himself to the study of philosophy. With the restlessness and versatility of the true Elizabethan, he enlivened the scholar's retirement by excursions into the field of courtly politics. As a young man he kissed the great Queen's hands, later he served James I and Charles I in diplomatic missions abroad, traveled extensively, saw military service, was knighted and made Baron. Though a persistent suppliant for high positions of state, he was rewarded with minor places only. In the troubled times between royalists and republicans, he seems to have sided with neither party, being what one of his critics called a "wavering politician," which may have meant that it is hard for a philosopher to be a partisan. His great philosophical work, *De Veritate,* was praised by foreign scholars as worthy of Francis Bacon, whom, with Ben Jonson, John Donne, and other eminent Elizabethans, he numbered among his friends. He composed other works on philosophy and religion, a history of the reign of Henry VIII, a volume of poems in the manner of the "metaphysical poets," and his autobiography. Only by the last is he generally remembered today. The *Autobiography,* written about 1644 when he was a little past sixty, was never finished; it brings Lord Herbert's reminiscences down to 1624, nearly a quarter of a century before his death. It was first printed by Horace Walpole in 1764. Herbert asserts at the beginning of his memoir that his purpose in writing it is to instruct his descendants: "I have thought fit to relate to my posterity those passages of my life, which I conceive may best declare me, and be most useful to them. In the delivery of which, I profess to write with all truth and sincerity, as scorning ever to deceive or speak false to

any." What the noble lord actually does, however, is to record with much vain boasting his escapades, gallantries, and triumphs in personal combats, entirely omitting his serious accomplishments as student and philosopher. His autobiography is a curious medley of pretentious moralizing and swaggering knight-errantry which, without any humorous intention whatever, impresses the reader as an amusing narrative of trivialities.

[The standard editions are Sir Sidney Lee's and W. H. Dircks's.]

LORD HERBERT'S PRODIGIOUS VALOR

And now taking boat, I passed along the river of Rhine to the Low Countries, where after some stay, I went to Antwerp and Brussels; and having passed some time in the court there, went from thence to Calais, where taking ship, I arrived at Dover, and so went to London. I had scarce been two days there, when the lords of the council sending for me, ended the difference betwixt the Lord of Walden and myself. And, now if I may say it without vanity, I was in great esteem both in court and city; many of the greatest desiring my company, though yet before that time I had no acquaintance with them. Richard, Earl of Dorset, to whom otherwise I was a stranger, one day invited me to Dorset House, where bringing me into his gallery, and showing me many pictures, he at last brought me to a frame covered with green taffeta, and asked me who I thought was there; and therewithal presently drawing the curtain, showed me my own picture; whereupon demanding how his lordship came to have it, he answered, that he had heard so many brave things of me, that he got a copy of a picture which one Larkin a painter drew for me, the original whereof I intended before my departure to the Low Countries for Sir Thomas Lucy. But not only the Earl of Dorset, but a greater person[1] than I will here nominate, got another copy from Larkin, and placing it afterwards in her cabinet (without that ever I knew any such thing was done), gave occasion to those who saw it after her death of more discourse than I could have wished; and indeed I may truly say, that taking of my picture was fatal to me, for more reasons than I shall think fit to deliver.

There was a lady also, wife to Sir John Ayres, knight, who finding some means to get a copy of my picture from Larkin, gave it to Mr. Isaac Oliver, the painter in Blackfriars, and desired him to draw it in little after his manner; which being done, she caused it to be set in gold and enamelled, and so wore it about her neck, so low that she hid it under her breasts, which, I conceive, coming

[1] Probably Anne, Queen of James I.

afterwards to the knowledge of Sir John Ayres, gave him more cause of jealousy than needed, had he known how innocent I was from pretending to any thing which might wrong him or his lady; since I could not so much as imagine that either she had my picture, or that she bare more than ordinary affection to me. It is true that she had a place in court, and attended Queen Anne, and was beside of an excellent wit and discourse, she had made herself a considerable person; howbeit little more than common civility ever passed betwixt us, though I confess I think no man was welcomer to her when I came, for which I shall allege this passage:—

Coming one day into her chamber, I saw her through the curtains lying upon her bed with a wax candle in one hand, and the picture I formerly mentioned in the other. I coming thereupon somewhat boldly to her, she blew out the candle, and hid the picture from me; myself thereupon being curious to know what that was she held in her hand, got the candle to be lighted again, by means whereof I found it was my picture she looked upon with more earnestness and passion than I could have easily believed, especially since myself was not engaged in any affection towards her. I could willingly have omitted this passage, but that it was the beginning of a bloody history which followed: howsoever, yet I must before the Eternal God clear her honour.

And now in court a great person [2] sent for me divers times to attend her, which summons though I obeyed, yet God knoweth I declined coming to her as much as conveniently I could, without incurring her displeasure; and this I did not only for very honest reasons, but, to speak ingenuously, because that affection passed betwixt me and another lady (who I believe was the fairest of her time) as nothing could divert it. I had not been long in London, when a violent burning fever seized upon me, which brought me almost to my death, though at last I did by slow degrees recover my health.

Being thus upon my amendment, the Lord Lisle, afterwards Earl of Leicester, sent me word that Sir John Ayres intended to kill me in my bed, and wished me keep a guard upon my chamber and person. The same advertisement was confirmed by Lucy, Countess of Bedford, and the Lady Hobby shortly after. Hereupon I thought fit to entreat Sir William Herbert, now Lord Powis, to go to Sir John Ayres, and tell him that I marvelled much at the information

[2] The Queen.

given me by these great persons, and that I could not imagine any sufficient ground hereof; howbeit, if he had any thing to say to me in a fair and noble way, I would give him the meeting as soon as I had got strength enough to stand upon my legs. Sir William hereupon brought me so ambiguous and doubtful an answer from him, that whatsoever he meant, he would not declare yet his intention, which was really, as I found afterwards, to kill me any way that he could, since, as he said, though falsely, I had whored his wife. Finding no means thus to surprise me, he sent me a letter to this effect; that he desired to meet me somewhere, and that it might so fall out as I might return quietly again. To this I replied, that if he desired to fight with me upon equal terms, I should upon assurance of the field and fair play, give him meeting when he did any way specify the cause, and that I did not think fit to come to him upon any other terms, having been sufficiently informed of his plots to assassinate me.

After this, finding he could take no advantage against me, then, in a treacherous way, he resolved to assassinate me in this manner; hearing I was to come to Whitehall on horseback, with two lackeys only, he attended my coming back in a place called Scotland Yard, at the hither end of Whitehall, as you come to it from the Strand, hiding himself here with four men armed, on purpose to kill me.

I took horse at Whitehall Gate, and passing by that place, he being armed with a sword and dagger, without giving me so much as the least warning, ran at me furiously, but instead of me, wounded my horse in the brisket, as far as his sword could enter for the bone. My horse hereupon starting aside, he ran him again in the shoulder, which, though it made the horse more timorous, yet gave me time to draw my sword. His men thereupon encompassed me, and wounded my horse in three places more; this made my horse kick and fling in that manner, as his men durst not come near me; which advantage I took to strike at Sir John Ayres with all my force, but he warded the blow both with his sword and dagger; instead of doing him harm, I broke my sword within a foot of the hilt. Hereupon some passenger that knew me, and observing my horse bleeding in so many places, and so many men assaulting me, and my sword broken, cried to me several times, "Ride away, ride away"; but I, scorning a base flight upon what terms soever, instead thereof, alighted as well as I could from my horse.

I had no sooner put one foot upon the ground, but Sir John Ayres pursuing me, made at my horse again, which the horse perceiving, pressed on me on the side I alighted, in that manner that he threw me down, so that I remained flat upon the ground, only one foot hanging in the stirrup, with that piece of a sword in my right hand. Sir John Ayres hereupon ran about the horse, and was thrusting his sword into me, when I, finding myself in this danger, did with both my arms reaching at his legs, pull them towards me, till he fell down backwards on his head. One of my footmen hereupon, who was a little Shropshire boy, freed my foot out of the stirrup; the other, which was a great fellow, having run away as soon as he saw the first assault. This gave me time to get upon my legs, and to put myself in the best posture I could with that poor remnant of a weapon.

Sir John Ayres by this time likewise was got up, standing betwixt me and some part of Whitehall, with two men on each side of him, and his brother behind him, with at least twenty or thirty persons of his friends, or attendants of the Earl of Suffolk. Observing thus a body of men standing in opposition against me, though to speak truly I saw no swords drawn, but by Sir John Ayres and his men, I ran violently against Sir John Ayres; but he knowing my sword had no point, held his sword and dagger over his head, as believing I could strike rather than thrust; which I no sooner perceived but I put a home thrust to the middle of his breast, that I threw him down with so much force, that his head fell first to the ground, and his heel upwards. His men hereupon assaulted me; when one, Mr. Mansel, a Glamorganshire gentleman, finding so many set against me alone, closed with one of them; a Scotch gentleman also closing with another, took him off also. All I could well do to those two which remained was, to ward their thrusts, which I did with that resolution, that I got ground upon them.

Sir John Ayres was now got up a third time, when I was making towards him with the intention to close, thinking that there was otherwise no safety for me, put by a thrust of his with my left hand, and so coming within him, received a stab with his dagger on my right side, which ran down my ribs as far as my hip, which I feeling, did with my right elbow force his hand, together with the hilt of the dagger, so near the upper part of my right side, that I made him leave hold. The dagger now sticking in me, Sir Henry

Cary, afterwards Lord of Falkland, and Lord Deputy of Ireland, finding the dagger thus in my body, snatched it out. This while I being closed with Sir John Ayres, hurt him on the head, and threw him down a third time, when, kneeling on the ground, and bestriding him, I struck at him as hard as I could with my piece of a sword, and wounded him in four several places, and did almost cut off his left hand. His two men this while struck at me; but it pleased God even miraculously to defend me; for when I lifted up my sword to strike at Sir John Ayres, I bore off their blows half a dozen times. His friends now finding him in this danger, took him by the head and shoulders, and drew him from betwixt my legs, and carried him along with them through Whitehall, at the stairs whereof he took boat. Sir Herbert Croft (as he told me afterwards) met him upon the water, vomiting all the way, which I believe was caused by the violence of the first thrust I gave him. His servants, brother, and friends being now retired also, I remained master of the place and his weapons; having first wrested his dagger from him, and afterwards struck his sword out of his hand.

This being done, I retired to a friend's house in the Strand, where I sent for a surgeon, who, searching my wound on the right side, and finding it not to be mortal, cured me in the space of some ten days, during which time I received many noble visits and messages from some of the best in the kingdom. Being now fully recovered of my hurts, I desired Sir Robert Harley to go to Sir John Ayres, and tell him, that though I thought he had not so much honour left in him that I could be any way ambitious to get it, yet that I desired to see him in the field with his sword in his hand. The answer that he sent me was, that I had whored his wife, and that he would kill me with a musket out of a window.

The Lords of the Privy Council, who had first sent for my sword, that they might see the little fragment of a weapon with which I had so behaved myself, as perchance the like had not been heard in any credible way, did afterwards command both him and me to appear before them; but I absenting myself on purpose, sent one Humphrey Hill with a challenge to him in an ordinary, which he refusing to receive, Humphrey Hill put it upon the point of his sword, and so let it fall before him and the company then present.

The Lords of the Privy Council had now taken order to appre-

hend Sir John Ayres, when I, finding nothing else to be done, submitted myself likewise to them. Sir John Ayres had now published everywhere, that the ground of his jealousy, and consequently of his assaulting me, was drawn from the confession of his wife the Lady Ayres. She, to vindicate her honour, as well as free me from this accusation, sent a letter to her aunt the Lady Crook, to this purpose; that her husband Sir John Ayres did lie falsely, in saying that I ever whored her; but most falsely of all did he lie, when he said he had it from her confession, for she had never said any such thing.

This letter the Lady Crook presented to me most opportunely, as I was going to the Council table before the Lords, who having examined Sir John Ayres concerning the cause of the quarrel against me, found him still persist in his wife's confession of the fact; and now he being withdrawn, I was sent for, when the Duke of Lennox, afterwards of Richmond, telling me that was the ground of his quarrel, and the only excuse he had for assaulting me in that manner, I desired his lordship to peruse the letter, which I told him was given me as I came into the room. This letter being publicly read by a clerk of the Council, the Duke of Lennox then said, that he thought Sir John Ayres the most miserable man living; for his wife had not only given him the lie, as he found by her letter, but his father had disinherited him for attempting to kill me in that barbarous fashion, which was most true, as I found afterwards. For the rest, that I might content myself with what I had done, it being more almost than could be believed, but that I had so many witnesses thereof; for all which reasons he commanded me, in the name of his Majesty, and all their Lordships, not to send any more to Sir John Ayres, nor to receive any message from him, in the way of fighting; which commandment I observed. Howbeit, I must not omit to tell, that some years afterwards, Sir John Ayres returning from Ireland by Beaumaris, where I then was, some of my servants and followers broke open the doors of the house where he was, and would (I believe) have cut him into pieces, but that I, hearing thereof, came suddenly to the house and recalled them, sending him word also, that I scorned to give him the usage he gave me, and that I would set him free out of the town; which courtesy of mine, as I was told afterwards, he did thankfully acknowledge.

Walton's "Life of Sir Henry Wotton"

Izaak Walton (1593–1683), that gentle lover of fish and men, was for many years a citizen of London and, in his old age, of Winchester where his body lies in the cathedral. After his retirement as shopkeeper in London he spent much of his time in the country at his favorite sport of fishing, or "angling." By the age of fifty-one he had made enough money to enable him to devote the rest of his long life to leisurely reflection, conversation with eminent men of church and state, and to writing. While Walton is best known through his *Compleat Angler* (1653), the most famous fisherman's book ever written, he also attained distinction by another work, the *Lives* of Donne, Wotton, Hooker, Herbert, and Sanderson, written in the order named. With three of these, Donne, Wotton, and Sanderson, he was intimately acquainted. He says that he was led to write the life of Donne, the first of his *Lives* (1640), through having collected notes on his career at the request of Sir Henry Wotton for an intended biography of that great preacher and poet. But as Wotton died before he could carry out his purpose, Walton undertook the congenial task. After completing the life of Donne, he proceeded to pay a similar tribute of friendship to Wotton. The life of Hooker followed, written at the suggestion of the Archbishop of Canterbury; then, nearly twenty years later, that of Herbert, "that pattern of primitive piety"; and at the age of eighty-five he published his life of Bishop Sanderson. Sir Henry Wotton, from whose biography the following extracts are taken, was a traveler, diplomatist, scholar and poet, who lived in the reigns of Elizabeth, James I, and Charles I. Sent on several important missions to continental courts by James I, he showed himself an exceptional ambassador. The later years of his life were passed at Eton College as provost of that venerable institution. Walton's life of Wotton, published in 1651, was prefixed to the *Reliquiae Wottonianae,* a miscellany of that statesman's and scholar's contributions to history and literature; later it was printed

as the second of the five *Lives* which make up that interesting volume of biography. Walton wrote with deliberate intention and is therefore regarded as the first regular, or professional, biographer in English literature. He is in another sense a "professional" biographer because he is chiefly concerned with presenting his men in connection with their professions. While he used to fish with Wotton, and doubtless could have written entertainingly of their angling experiences, he confines himself to the narration of his friend's diplomatic, religious, and educational accomplishments. The biography is saved from dullness, however, by Walton's sly touches of humor and his winsome artlessness.

[Standard texts are Major's edition, 1825, and the London edition of 1858.]

THE WIT AND WISDOM OF SIR HENRY WOTTON

Sir Henry Wotton was a branch of such a kindred, as left a stock of reputation to their posterity: such reputation as might kindle a generous emulation in strangers, and preserve a noble ambition in those of his name and family, to perform actions worthy of their ancestors.

And that Sir Henry Wotton did so, might appear more perfectly than my pen can express it, if of his many surviving friends, some one of higher parts and employment had been pleased to have commended his to posterity; but since some years are now past, and they have all—I know not why—forborne to do it, my gratitude to the memory of my dead friend, and the renewed request of some that still live solicitous to see this duty performed; these have had a power to persuade me to undertake it; which truly I have not done but with distrust of mine own abilities; and yet so far from despair, that I am modestly confident my humble language shall be accepted, because I shall present all readers with a commixture of truth, and Sir Henry Wotton's merits.

This being premised, I proceed to tell the reader, that the Father of Sir Henry Wotton was twice married; first to Elizabeth, the daughter of Sir John Rudstone, Knight; after whose death, though his inclination was averse to all contentions, yet necessitated he was to several suits in Law; in the prosecution whereof,—which took up much of his time, and were the occasion of many discontents,—he was by divers of his friends earnestly persuaded to a re-marriage; to whom he as often answered, "That if ever he did put on a resolution to marry, he was seriously resolved to avoid three sorts of persons: namely,

> Those that had children;
> Those that had Law-suits;
> And those that were of his kindred."

And yet, following his own Law-suits, he met in Westminster-Hall with Mrs. Eleonora Morton, Widow to Robert Morton, of

Kent, Esquire, who was also engaged in several suits in Law: and he observing her comportment at the time of hearing one of her causes before the Judges, could not but at the same time both compassionate her condition, and affect her person; for the tears of lovers, or beauty dressed in sadness, are observed to have in them a charming eloquence, and to become very often too strong to be resisted: which I mention, because it proved so with this Thomas Wotton; for although there were in her a concurrence of all those accidents, against which he had so seriously resolved, yet his affection to her grew then so strong, that he resolved to solicit her for a wife, and did, and obtained her.

By her—who was the daughter of Sir William Finch, of Eastwell, in Kent,—he had only Henry his youngest son. His Mother undertook to be tutoress unto him during much of his childhood; for whose care and pains he paid her each day with such visible signs of future perfection in learning, as turned her employment into a pleasing trouble; which she was content to continue, till his Father took him into his own particular care, and disposed of him to a Tutor in his own house at Bocton.

And when time and diligent instruction had made him fit for a removal to an higher form,—which was very early,—he was sent to Winchester-school; a place of strict discipline and order, that so he might in his youth be moulded into a method of living by rule, which his wise father knew to be the most necessary way to make the future part of his life both happy to himself, and useful for the discharge of all business, whether public or private.

And that he might be confirmed in this regularity, he was, at a fit age, removed from that School, to be a Commoner of New-College in Oxford; both being founded by William Wickham, Bishop of Winchester.

There he continued till about the eighteenth year of his age, and was then transplanted into Queen's College: where, within that year, he was by the chief of that College, persuasively enjoined to write a play for their private use;—it was the Tragedy of Tancredo—which was so interwoven with sentences, and for the method and exact personating those humours, passions and dispositions, which he proposed to represent, so performed, that the gravest of that society declared, he had, in a slight employment, given an early and a solid testimony of his future abilities. And though there may

be some sour dispositions, which may think this not worth a memorial, yet that wise Knight, Baptista Guarini,—whom learned Italy accounts one of her ornaments,—thought it neither an uncomely nor an unprofitable employment for his age.

But I pass to what will be thought more serious.

About the twentieth year of his age he proceeded Master of Arts; and at that time read in Latin three Lectures *de Oculo;* wherein he having described the form, the motion, the curious composure of the Eye, and demonstrated how of those very many, every humour and nerve performs its distinct office, so as the God of Order hath appointed, without mixture or confusion: and all this to the advantage of man, to whom the Eye is given, not only as the body's guide, but whereas all other of his senses require time to inform the soul, this in an instant apprehends and warns him of danger; teaching him in the very eyes of others to discover Wit, Folly, Love, and Hatred. After he had made these observations, he fell to dispute this Optic question. "Whether we see by the emission of the beams from within, or reception of the species from without?" And after that, and many other like learned disquisitions, he, in the conclusion of his Lectures, took a fair occasion to beautify his discourse with a commendation of the blessing and benefit of "Seeing;—by which we do not only discover Nature's secrets, but, with a continued content—for the eye is never wearied of seeing—behold the great Light of the World, and by it discover the fabric of the Heavens, and both the order and motion of the Celestial Orbs; nay, that if the Eye look but downward, it may rejoice to behold the bosom of the Earth, our common mother, embroidered and adorned with numberless and various flowers, which man sees daily grow up to perfection, and then silently moralise his own condition, who, in a short time,—like those very flowers—decays, withers, and quickly returns again to that Earth, from which both had their first being."

These were so exactly debated, and so rhetorically heightened, as, among other admirers, caused that learned Italian, Albericus Gentilis, then Professor of the Civil Law in Oxford, to call him "Henrice mi Ocelle;" which dear expression of his was also used by divers of Sir Henry's dearest friends, and by many other persons of note during his stay in the University.

But his stay was not long, at least not so long as his friends once

intended; for the year after Sir Henry proceeded Master of Arts, his Father—whom Sir Henry did never mention without this, or some like reverential expression, as, "That good man my Father," or, "My Father, the best of men;"—about that time, this good man changed this for a better life; leaving to Sir Henry, as to his other younger sons, a rent-charge of an hundred marks a year, to be paid for ever out of some one of his Manors, of a much greater value. . . .

After his Optic Lecture, he was taken into such a bosom friendship with the learned Albericus Gentilis,—whom I formerly named,—that, if it had been possible, Gentilis would have breathed all his excellent knowledge, both of the Mathematics and Law, into the breast of his dear Harry, for so Gentilis used to call him: and though he was not able to do that, yet there was in Sir Henry such a propensity and connaturalness to the Italian language, and those studies whereof Gentilis was a great master, that the friendship between them did daily increase, and proved daily advantageous to Sir Henry, for the improvement of him in several sciences during his stay in the University.

From which place, before I shall invite the Reader to follow him into a foreign nation, though I must omit to mention divers persons that were then in Oxford, of memorable note for learning, and friends to Sir Henry Wotton; yet I must not omit the mention of a love that was there begun betwixt him and Dr. Donne, sometime Dean of St. Paul's; a man of whose abilities I shall forbear to say any thing, because he who is of this nation, and pretends to learning or ingenuity, and is ignorant of Dr. Donne, deserves not to know him. The friendship of these two I must not omit to mention, being such a friendship as was generously elemented; and as it was begun in their youth, and in an University, and there maintained by correspondent inclinations and studies, so it lasted till age and death forced a separation.

In Oxford he stayed till about two years after his Father's death; at which time he was about the twenty-second year of his age; and having to his great wit added the ballast of learning, and knowledge of the Arts, he then laid aside his books, and betook himself to the useful library of travel, and a general conversation with mankind; employing the remaining part of his youth, his industry, and fortune, to adorn his mind, and to purchase the rich

treasure of foreign knowledge: of which both for the secrets of Nature, the dispositions of many nations, their several laws and languages, he was the possessor in a very large measure; as I shall faithfully make to appear, before I take my pen from the following narration of his life.

In his travels, which was almost nine years before his return into England, he stayed but one year in France, and most of that in Geneva, where he became acquainted with Theodore Beza,—then very aged;—and with Isaac Casaubon, in whose house, if I be rightly informed, Sir Henry Wotton was lodged, and there contracted a most worthy friendship with that man of rare learning and ingenuity.

Three of the remaining eight years were spent in Germany, the other five in Italy,—the stage on which God appointed he should act a great part of his life;—where, both in Rome, Venice, and Florence, he became acquainted with the most eminent men for learning and all manner of Arts; as Picture, Sculpture, Chemistry, Architecture, and other manual Arts, even Arts of inferior nature; of all which he was a most dear lover, and a most excellent judge.

He returned out of Italy into England about the thirtieth year of his age, being then noted by many both for his person and comportment: for indeed he was of a choice shape, tall of stature, and of a most persuasive behaviour: which was so mixed with sweet discourse and civilities, as gained him much love from all persons with whom he entered into an acquaintance.

And whereas he was noted in his youth to have a sharp wit, and apt to jest; that, by time, travel, and conversation, was so polished, and made so useful, that his company seemed to be one of the delights of mankind; insomuch as Robert Earl of Essex—then one of the darlings of Fortune, and in greatest favour with Queen Elizabeth—invited him first into a friendship, and, after a knowledge of his great abilities, to be one of his Secretaries; the other being Mr. Henry Cuffe, sometime of Merton College in Oxford,—and there also the acquaintance of Sir Henry Wotton in his youth,—Mr. Cuffe being then a man of no common note in the University for his learning; nor, after his removal from that place, for the great abilities of his mind, nor indeed for the fatalness of his end.

Sir Henry Wotton, being now taken into a serviceable friendship with the Earl of Essex, did personally attend his counsels and

employments in two voyages at sea against the Spaniards, and also in that—which was the Earl's last—into Ireland; that voyage, wherein he then did so much provoke the Queen to anger, and worse at his return into England; upon whose immoveable favour the Earl had built such sandy hopes, as encouraged him to those undertakings, which, with the help of a contrary faction, suddenly caused his commitment to the Tower.

Sir Henry Wotton observing this, though he was not of that faction—for the Earl's followers were also divided into their several interests—which encouraged the Earl to those undertakings which proved so fatal to him and divers of his confederation, yet, knowing Treason to be so comprehensive, as to take in even circumstances, and out of them to make such positive conclusions, as subtle Statesmen shall project, either for their revenge or safety; considering this, he thought prevention, by absence out of England, a better security, than to stay in it, and there plead his innocency in a prison. Therefore did he, so soon as the Earl was apprehended, very quickly and as privately, glide through Kent to Dover, without so much as looking toward his native and beloved Bocton; and was by the help of favourable winds, and liberal payment of the mariners, within sixteen hours after his departure from London, set upon the French shore: where he heard shortly after, that the Earl was arraigned, condemned, and beheaded; and that his friend Mr. Cuffe was hanged, and divers other persons of eminent quality executed.

The times did not look so favourably upon Sir Henry Wotton, as to invite his return into England: having therefore procured of Sir Edward Wotton, his elder brother, an assurance that his annuity should be paid him in Italy, thither he went, happily renewing his intermitted friendship and interest, and indeed his great content in a new conversation with his old acquaintances in that nation, and more particularly in Florence,—which City is not more eminent for the Great Duke's Court, than for the great recourse of men of choicest note for learning and arts,—in which number he there met with his old friend Signior Vietta, a gentleman of Venice, and then taken to be Secretary to the Great Duke of Tuscany.

After some stay in Florence, he went the fourth time to visit Rome, where, in the English College he had very many friends;—

their humanity made them really so, though they knew him to be a dissenter from many of their principles of religion; and having enjoyed their company, and satisfied himself concerning some curiosities that did partly occasion his journey thither, he returned back to Florence, where a most notable accident befel him; an accident that did not only find new employment for his choice abilities, but did introduce him to a knowledge and interest with our King James, then King of Scotland; which I shall proceed to relate.

But first I am to tell the Reader, that though Queen Elizabeth, or she and her Council, were never willing to declare her successor; yet James, then King of the Scots, was confidently believed by most to be the man upon whom the sweet trouble of Kingly government would be imposed; and the Queen declining very fast, both by age and visible infirmities, those that were of the Romish persuasion in point of Religion,—even Rome itself, and those of this nation,—knowing that the death of the Queen and the establishing of her successor, were taken to be critical days for destroying or establishing the Protestant religion in this nation, did therefore improve all opportunities for preventing a Protestant Prince to succeed her. And as the Pope's Excommunication of Queen Elizabeth, had both by the judgment and practice of the Jesuited Papist, exposed her to be warrantably destroyed; so,—if we may believe an angry adversary, a secular Priest against a Jesuit—you may believe, that about this time there were many endeavours, first to excommunicate, and then to shorten the life of King James.

Immediately after Sir Henry Wotton's return from Rome to Florence, which was about a year before the death of Queen Elizabeth—Ferdinand, the Great Duke of Florence, had intercepted certain letters, that discovered a design to take away the life of James, the King of Scots. The Duke abhorring this fact, and resolving to endeavour a prevention of it, advised with his Secretary Vietta, by what means a caution might be best given to that King; and after consideration it was resolved to be done by Sir Henry Wotton, whom Vietta first commended to the Duke, and the Duke had noted and approved of above all the English that frequented his Court.

Sir Henry was gladly called by his friend Vietta to the Duke, who, after much profession of trust and friendship, acquainted him

with the secret; and being well instructed, dispatched him into Scotland with letters to the King, and with those letters such Italian antidotes against poison, as the Scots till then had been strangers to.

Having parted from the Duke, he took up the name and language of an Italian; and thinking it best to avoid the line of English intelligence and danger, he posted into Norway, and through that country towards Scotland, where he found the King at Stirling. Being there, he used means, by Bernard Lindsey, one of the King's Bed-chamber, to procure him a speedy and private conference with his Majesty; assuring him, "That the business which he was to negociate was of such consequence, as had caused the great Duke of Tuscany to enjoin him suddenly to leave his native country of Italy, to impart it to his King."

This being by Bernard Lindsey made known to the King, after a little wonder—mixed with jealousy—to hear of an Italian Ambassador, or messenger, required his name,—which was said to be Octavio Baldi,—and appointed him to be heard privately at a fixed hour that evening.

When Octavio Baldi came to the Presence-chamber door, he was requested to lay aside his long rapier—which, Italian-like, he then wore;—and being entered the chamber, he found there with the King three or four Scotch Lords standing distant in several corners of the chamber: at the sight of whom he made a stand; which the King observing, "bade him be bold, and deliver his message; for he would undertake for the secrecy of all that were present." Then did Octavio Baldi deliver his letters and his message to the King in Italian; which when the King had graciously received, after a little pause, Octavio Baldi steps to the table, and whispers to the King in his own language, that he was an Englishman, beseeching him for a more private conference with his Majesty, and that he might be concealed during his stay in that nation; which was promised and really performed by the King, during all his abode there, which was about three months; all which time was spent with much pleasantness to the King, and with as much to Octavio Baldi himself, as that country could afford; from which he departed as true an Italian as he came thither.

To the Duke of Florence he returned with a fair and grateful account of his employment; and within some few months after his

return, there came certain news to Florence, that Queen Elizabeth was dead: and James, King of the Scots, proclaimed King of England. The Duke knowing travel and business to be the best schools of wisdom, and that Sir Henry Wotton had been tutored in both, advised him to return presently to England, and there joy the King with his new and better title, and wait there upon Fortune for a better employment.

When King James came into England, he found amongst other of the late Queen's officers, Sir Edward, who was, after Lord Wotton, Comptroller of the House, of whom he demanded, "If he knew one Henry Wotton, that had spent much time in foreign travel?" The Lord replied he knew him well, and that he was his brother. Then the King, asking where he then was, was answered, at Venice or Florence; but by late letters from thence he understood he would suddenly be at Paris. "Send for him," said the King, "and when he shall come into England, bid him repair privately to me." The Lord Wotton, after a little wonder, asked the King, "If he knew him?" To which the King answered, "You must rest unsatisfied of that till you bring the gentleman to me."

Not many months after this discourse, the Lord Wotton brought his brother to attend the King, who took him in his arms, and bade him welcome by the name of Octavio Baldi, saying, he was the most honest, and therefore the best dissembler that ever he met with: and said, "Seeing I know you neither want learning, travel, nor experience, and that I have had so real a testimony of your faithfulness and abilities to manage an ambassage, I have sent for you to declare my purpose; which is, to make use of you in that kind hereafter." And indeed the King did so, most of those two and twenty years of his reign; but before he dismissed Octavio Baldi from his present attendance upon him, he restored him to his old name of Henry Wotton, by which he then knighted him.

For eight years after Sir Henry Wotton's going into Italy, he stood fair and highly valued in the King's opinion; but at last became much clouded by an accident, which I shall proceed to relate.

At his first going Ambassador into Italy, as he passed through Germany, he stayed some days at Augusta; where having been in his former travels well known by many of the best note for learning and ingeniousness,—those that are esteemed the virtuosi of that

nation,—with whom he passing an evening in merriments, was requested by Christopher Flecamore to write some sentence in his Albo;—a book of white paper, which for that purpose many of the German gentry usually carry about them;—and Sir Henry Wotton consenting to the motion, took an occasion, from some accidental discourse of the present company, to write a pleasant definition of an Ambassador in these very words:

"Legatus est vir bonus, peregrè missus ad mentiendum Reipublicae causa." Which Sir Henry Wotton could have been content should have been thus Englished:

"An ambassador is an honest man, sent to lie abroad for the good of his country." But the word for *lie*—being the hinge upon which the conceit was to turn—was not so expressed in Latin, as would admit—in the hands of an enemy especially—so fair a construction as Sir Henry thought in English. Yet as it was, it slept quietly among other sentences in this Albo almost eight years, till by accident it fell into the hands of Jasper Scioppius, a Romanist, a man of a restless spirit and a malicious pen; who, with books against King James, prints this as a principle of that religion professed by the King, and his Ambassador Sir Henry Wotton, then at Venice; and in Venice it was presently after written in several glass-windows, and spitefully declared to be Sir Henry Wotton's.

This coming to the knowledge of King James, he apprehended it to be such an oversight, such a weakness, or worse, in Sir Henry Wotton, as caused the King to express much wrath against him: and this caused Sir Henry Wotton to write two apologies, one to Velserus—one of the chiefs of Augusta—in the universal language, which he caused to be printed, and given and scattered in the most remarkable places both of Germany and Italy, as an antidote against the venomous books of Scioppius; and another apology to King James; which were both so ingenious, so clear, and so choicely eloquent, that his Majesty—who was a pure judge of it—could not forbear, at the receipt thereof, to declare publicly, "That Sir Henry Wotton had commuted sufficiently for a greater offence."

And now, as broken bones well set become stronger, so Sir Henry Wotton did not only recover, but was much more confirmed in his Majesty's estimation and favour than formerly he had been.

And, as that man of great wit and useful fancy, his friend Dr. Donne, gave in a Will of his—a Will of conceits—his Reputation

to his Friends, and his Industry to his Foes, because from thence he received both: so those friends, that in this time of trial laboured to excuse this facetious freedom of Sir Henry Wotton's, were to him more dear, and by him more highly valued; and those acquaintance, that urged this as an advantage against him, caused him by this error to grow more wise, and—which is the best fruit error can bring forth—for the future to become more industriously watchful over his tongue and pen.

To London he came the year before King James died; who having, for the reward of his foreign service, promised him the reversion of an office, which was fit to be turned into present money, which he wanted, for a supply of his present necessities; and also granted him the reversion of the Master of the Rolls place, if he outlived charitable Sir Julius Caesar, who then possessed it, and then grown so old that he was said to be kept alive beyond Nature's course, by the prayers of those many poor which he daily relieved.

But these were but in hope; and his condition required a present support: for in the beginning of these employments he sold to his elder brother, the Lord Wotton, the rent-charge left by his good father; and—which is worse—was now at his return indebted to several persons, whom he was not able to satisfy, but by the King's payment of his arrears, due for his foreign employments. He had brought into England many servants, of which some were German and Italian Artists: this was part of his condition, who had many times hardly sufficient to supply the occasions of the day: for it may by no means be said of his providence, as himself said of Sir Philip Sidney's wit, "That it was the very measure of congruity," he being always so careless of money, as though our Saviour's words, "Care not for to-morrow," were to be literally understood.

But it pleased the God of Providence, that in this juncture of time, the Provostship of his Majesty's College of Eton, became void by the death of Mr. Thomas Murray, for which there were, as the place deserved, many earnest and powerful suitors to the King. And Sir Henry, who had for many years—like Sisyphus—rolled the restless stone of a State-employment, knowing experimentally that the great blessing of sweet content was not to be found in multitudes of men or business, and that a College was the fittest

place to nourish holy thoughts, and to afford rest both to his body and mind, which his age—being now almost threescore years—seemed to require, did therefore use his own, and the interest of all his friends to procure that place. By which means, and quitting the King of his promised reversionary offices, and a piece of honest policy,—which I have not time to relate,—he got a grant of it from his Majesty. . . .

Being thus settled according to the desires of his heart, his first study was the Statutes of the College; by which he conceived himself bound to enter into Holy Orders, which he did, being made Deacon with all convenient speed. Shortly after which time, as he came in his surplice from the Church-service, an old friend, a person of quality, met him so attired, and joyed him of his new habit. To whom Sir Henry Wotton replied, "I thank God and the King, by whose goodness I am now in this condition; a condition which that Emperor Charles the Fifth seemed to approve; who, after so many remarkable victories, when his glory was great in the eyes of all men, freely gave up his Crown, and the many cares that attended it, to Philip his Son, making a holy retreat to a Cloisteral life, where he might, by devout meditations, consult with God,—which the rich or busy men seldom do—and have leisure both to examine the errors of his life past, and prepare for that great day wherein all flesh must make an account of their actions: and after a kind of tempestuous life, I now have the like advantage from him, 'that makes the outgoings of the morning to praise him;' even from my God, whom I daily magnify for this particular mercy of an exemption from business, a quiet mind, and a liberal maintenance, even in this part of my life, when my age and infirmities seem to sound me a retreat from the pleasures of this world, and invite me to contemplation, in which I have ever taken the greatest felicity."

And now to speak a little of the employment of his time in the College. After his customary public Devotions, his use was to retire into his Study, and there to spend some hours in reading the Bible, and Authors in Divinity, closing up his meditations with private prayer; this was, for the most part, his employment in the forenoon. But when he was once sat down to dinner, then nothing but cheerful thoughts possessed his mind, and those still increased by constant company at his table, of such persons as

brought thither additions both of learning and pleasure; but some part of most days was usually spent in Philosophical conclusions. Nor did he forget his innate pleasure of Angling, which he would usually call, "his idle time not idly spent;" saying often, "he would rather live five May months, than forty Decembers."

He was a great lover of his neighbors, and a bountiful entertainer of them very often at his table, where his meat was choice, and his discourse better.

He was a constant cherisher of all those youths in that School, in whom he found either a constant diligence, or a genius that prompted them to learning; for whose encouragement he was—beside many other things of necessity and beauty—at the charge of setting up in it two rows of pillars, on which he caused to be choicely drawn the pictures of divers of the most famous Greek and Latin Historians, Poets, and Orators; persuading them not to neglect Rhetoric, because "Almighty God has left mankind affections to be wrought upon:" And he would often say, "That none despised Eloquence, but such dull souls as were not capable of it." He would also often make choice of some observations out of those Historians and Poets; and would never leave the School without dropping some choice Greek or Latin apophthegm or sentence, that might be worthy of a room in the memory of a growing scholar.

He was pleased constantly to breed up one or more hopeful youths, which he picked out of the School, and took into his own domestic care, and to attend him at his meals; out of whose discourse and behaviour, he gathered observations for the better completing of his intended work of Education: of which, by his still striving to make the whole better, he lived to leave but part to posterity.

He was a great enemy to wrangling disputes of Religion; concerning which I shall say a little, both to testify that, and to shew the readiness of his wit.

Having at his being in Rome made acquaintance with a pleasant Priest, who invited him one evening to hear their Vesper music at Church; the Priest seeing Sir Henry stand obscurely in a corner, sends to him by a boy of the Choir this question, writ on a small piece of paper; "Where was your Religion to be found before Luther?" To which question Sir Henry presently underwrit, "My

Religion was to be found then, where yours is not to be found now, in the written Word of God."

The next Vesper, Sir Henry went purposely to the same Church, and sent one of the Choir boys with this question to his honest, pleasant friend, the Priest: "Do you believe all those many thousands of poor Christians were damned, that were excommunicated because the Pope and the Duke of Venice could not agree about their temporal power? even those poor Christians that knew not why they quarreled. Speak your conscience." To which he underwrit in French, "Monsieur, excusez-moi."

To one that asked him, "Whether a Papist may be saved?" he replied, "You may be saved without knowing that. Look to yourself."

To another, whose earnestness exceeded his knowledge, and was still railing against the Papists, he gave this advice: "Pray, Sir, forbear till you have studied the points better: for the wise Italians have this Proverb: 'He that understands amiss concludes worse.' And take heed of thinking, the farther you go from the Church of Rome, the nearer you are to God."

And to another that spake indiscreet and bitter words against Arminius,[1] I heard him reply to this purpose:

"In my travels towards Venice, as I passed through Germany, I rested almost a year at Leyden, where I entered into an acquaintance with Arminius,—then the Professor of Divinity in the University,—a man much talked of in this age, which is made up of opposition and controversy. And indeed, if I mistake not Arminius in his expressions,—as so weak a brain as mine is may easily do,—then I know I differ from him in some points; yet I profess my judgment of him to be, that he was a man of most rare learning, and I knew him to be of a most strict life, and of a most meek spirit. And that he was so mild appears by his proposals to our Master Perkins of Cambridge, from whose book, 'Of the Order and Causes of Salvation'—which first was writ in Latin—Arminius took the occasion of writing some queries to him concerning the consequents of his doctrine; intending them, 'tis said, to come privately to Mr. Perkins' own hands, and to receive from him a like private and a like loving answer. But Mr. Perkins died before those queries

[1] Arminius was an early seventeenth-century Dutch theologian, who opposed the strict Calvinistic doctrines held by most Protestants of the time.

came to him, and 'tis thought Arminius meant them to die with him; for though he lived long after, I have heard he forebore to publish them: but since his death his sons did not. And 'tis pity, if God had been so pleased, that Mr. Perkins did not live to see, consider, and answer those proposals himself; for he was also of a most meek spirit, and of great and sanctified learning. And though, since their deaths, many of high parts and piety have undertaken to clear the controversy; yet for the most part they have rather satisfied themselves, than convinced the dissenting party. And, doubtless, many middle-witted men, which yet may mean well, many scholars that are in the highest form for learning, which yet may preach well, men that are but preachers, and shall never know, till they come to Heaven, where the questions stick betwixt Arminius and the Church of England,—if there be any,—will yet in this world be tampering with, and thereby perplexing the controversy, and do therefore justly fall under the rebuke of St. Jude, for being busy-bodies, and for meddling with things they understand not."

And here it offers itself—I think not unfitly, to tell the Reader, that a friend of Sir Henry Wotton's being designed for the employment of an Ambassador, came to Eton, and requested from him some experimental rules for his prudent and safe carriage in his negociations; to whom he smiling gave this for an infallible aphorism: "That, to be in safety himself, and serviceable to his country, he should always, and upon all occasions, speak the truth, —it seems a State paradox—for, says Sir Henry Wotton, you shall never be believed; and by this means your truth will secure yourself, if you shall ever be called to any account; and it will also put your adversaries—who will still hunt counter—to a loss in all their disquisitions and undertakings."

THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

Colley Cibber's Autobiography

Colley Cibber (1671–1757) was born in London and spent his life there. He became an actor at eighteen, a dramatist at twenty-five, and steadily advanced as player and playwright until he was one of the foremost figures in the theatrical life of his time. His numerous comedies were notably successful and his revivals of older plays were popular. In 1709 he became a managing actor of the Haymarket Theatre and was for many years a leading member of the association of players connected with the principal houses. Along with his professional associates Cibber strove to improve the condition of the stage which, under the Restoration dramatists, had become notoriously corrupt. By presenting cleaner plays he helped to give tone to the contemporary drama. Cibber was enough of a "character" to invite numerous attacks: Pope brilliantly damned him in his *Dunciad* by making him heroic in impudence and dullness; Johnson spoke contemptuously of him, and Fielding satirized him. The fact that Cibber, a poor poet, had been made poet-laureate increased the derisive merriment; and then, too, he was vain and garrulous. His plays and his poetry are forgotten, but posterity will not forget his autobiography which was published in 1740 as *An Apology for the Life of Mr. Colley Cibber, Written by Himself*. Swift, who disliked Cibber, said he found it so interesting that he sat up all night reading it. It is an uneven performance, often discursive, with long stretches of circumstantial comment on actors' jealousies and theatrical quarrels which are likely to weary the modern reader unless he should happen to be a student of the early eighteenth-century stage. As a record of theatrical doings and persons in an era of good acting and mediocre plays by a man who was himself a large part of the moving show, the autobiography of Colley Cibber is a mine of rich material. This matter alone, however, would not make the book perennially appealing. What

does keep the *Apology of Mr. Cibber* alive in the memory of later times is the revelation, fitful, frank, vain, and sometimes foolish, of a human being with remarkable gifts of dramatic narration. The garrulities of a septuagenarian—he was almost seventy when his memorable work was published—have furnished amusement as well as instruction to a limited succession of readers whom more formal autobiographies have left cold.

[The standard edition is Lowe's, London, 1888.]

CIBBER CHOOSES A PROFESSION

I AM now come to that Crisis of my Life when Fortune seem'd to be at a Loss what she should do with me. Had she favour'd my Father's first Designation of me, he might then, perhaps, have had as sanguine Hopes of my being a Bishop as I afterwards conceived of my being a General when I first took Arms at the Revolution.[1] Nay, after that I had a third Chance too, equally as good, of becoming an Under-propper of the State. How at last I came to be none of all these the Sequel will inform you.

About the Year 1687 I was taken from School to stand at the Election of Children into Winchester College; my being by my Mother's Side a Descendant of William of Wickam, the Founder, my Father (who knew little how the World was to be dealt with) imagined my having that Advantage would be Security enough for my Success, and so sent me simply down thither, without the least favourable Recommendation or Interest, but that of my naked Merit and a pompous Pedigree in my Pocket. Had he tack'd a Direction to my Back, and sent me by the Carrier to the Mayor of the Town, to be chosen Member of Parliament there, I might have had just as much Chance to have succeeded in the one as the other. But I must not omit in this Place to let you know that the Experience which my Father then bought, at my Cost, taught him some Years after to take a more judicious Care of my younger Brother, Lewis Cibber, whom, with the Present of a Statue of the Founder, of his own making, he recommended to the same College. This Statue now stands (I think) over the School Door there, and was so well executed that it seem'd to speak—for its Kinsman. It was no sooner set up than the Door of Preferment was open to him.

Here one would think my Brother had the Advantage of me in the Favour of Fortune, by this his first laudable Step into the World.

[1] The bloodless Revolution of 1688 by which the Catholic King, James II, was deposed and the Protestant sovereigns, William and Mary, chosen by Parliament to succeed him.

I own I was so proud of his Success that I even valued myself upon it; and yet it is but a melancholy Reflection to observe how unequally his Profession and mine were provided for; when I, who had been the Outcast of Fortune, could find means, from my Income of the Theatre, before I was my own Master there, to supply in his highest Preferment his common Necessities. I cannot part with his Memory without telling you I had as sincere a Concern for this Brother's Well-being as my own. He had lively Parts and more than ordinary Learning, with a good deal of natural Wit and Humour; but from too great a disregard to his Health he died a Fellow of New College in Oxford soon after he had been ordained by Dr. Compton, then Bishop of London. I now return to the State of my own Affair at Winchester.

After the Election, the Moment I was inform'd that I was one of the unsuccessful Candidates, I blest myself to think what a happy Reprieve I had got from the confin'd Life of a School-boy! and the same Day took Post back to London, that I might arrive time enough to see a Play (then my darling Delight) before my Mother might demand an Account of my travelling Charges. When I look back to that Time, it almost makes me tremble to think what Miseries, in fifty Years farther in Life, such an unthinking Head was liable to! To ask why Providence afterwards took more Care of me than I did of myself, might be making too bold an Enquiry into its secret Will and Pleasure; All I can say to that Point is, that I am thankful and amazed at it!

'Twas about this time I first imbib'd an Inclination, which I durst not reveal, for the Stage; for besides that I knew it would disoblige my Father, I had no Conception of any means practicable to make my way to it. I therefore suppress'd the bewitching Ideas of so sublime a Station, and compounded with my Ambition by laying a lower Scheme, of only getting the nearest way into the immediate Life of a Gentleman-Collegiate. My Father being at this time employ'd at Chattsworth in Derbyshire by the (then) Earl of Devonshire, who was raising that Seat from a Gothick to a Grecian Magnificence, I made use of the Leisure I then had in London to open to him by Letter my Disinclination to wait another Year for an uncertain Preferment at Winchester, and to entreat him that he would send me, *per saltum,* by a shorter Cut, to the University. My Father, who was naturally indulgent to me, seem'd to comply with

my Request, and wrote word that as soon as his Affairs would permit, he would carry me with him and settle me in some College, but rather at Cambridge, where (during his late Residence at that Place, in making some Statues that now stand upon Trinity College New Library) he had contracted some Acquaintance with the Heads of Houses, who might assist his Intentions for me. This I lik'd better than to go discountenanc'd to Oxford, to which it would have been a sort of Reproach to me not to have come elected. After some Months were elaps'd, my Father, not being willing to let me lie too long idling in London, sent for me down to Chattsworth, to be under his Eye, till he cou'd be at leisure to carry me to Cambridge. Before I could set out on my Journey thither, the Nation fell in labour of the Revolution, the News being then just brought to London That the Prince of Orange at the Head of an Army was landed in the West. When I came to Nottingham, I found my Father in Arms there, among those Forces which the Earl of Devonshire had rais'd for the Redress of our violated Laws and Liberties. My Father judg'd this a proper Season for a young Strippling to turn himself loose into the Bustle of the World; and being himself too advanc'd in Years to endure the Winter Fatigue which might possibly follow, entreated that noble Lord that he would be pleas'd to accept of his Son in his room, and that he would give him (my Father) leave to return and finish his Works at Chattsworth. This was so well receiv'd by his Lordship that he not only admitted of my Service, but promis'd my Father in return that when Affairs were settled he would provide for me. Upon this my Father return'd to Derbyshire, while I, not a little transported, jump'd into his Saddle. Thus in one Day all my Thoughts of the University were smother'd in Ambition! A slight Commission for a Horse-Officer was the least View I had before me. At this Crisis you cannot but observe that the Fate of King James and of the Prince of Orange, and that of so minute a Being as my self, were all at once upon the Anvil: In what shape they would severally come out, tho' a good Guess might be made, was not then demonstrable to the deepest Foresight; but as my Fortune seem'd to be of small Importance to the Publick, Providence thought fit to postpone it 'till that of those great Rulers of Nations was justly perfected. Yet, had my Father's Business permitted him to have carried me one Month sooner (as he intended) to the University, who knows but by this time that

purer Fountain might have wash'd my Imperfections into a Capacity of writing (instead of Plays and Annual Odes) Sermons and Pastoral Letters. But whatever Care of the Church might so have fallen to my share, as I dare say it may be now in better Hands, I ought not to repine at my being otherwise disposed of.

However low my Pretensions to Preferment were at this time, my Father thought that a little Court-Favour added to them might give him a Chance for saving the Expence of maintaining me, as he had intended, at the University: He therefore order'd me to draw up a Petition to the Duke, and, to give it some Air of Merit, to put it into Latin, the Prayer of which was, That his Grace would be pleas'd to do something (I really forget what) for me.—However the Duke, upon receiving it, was so good as to desire my Father would send me to London in the Winter, where he would consider of some Provision for me. It might, indeed, well require time to consider it; for I believe it was then harder to know what I was really fit for, than to have got me any thing I was not fit for: However, to London I came, where I enter'd into my first State of Attendance and Dependance for about five Months, till the February following. But alas! in my Intervals of Leisure, by frequently seeing Plays, my wise Head was turn'd to higher Views, I saw no Joy in any other Life than that of an Actor, so that (as before, when a Candidate at Winchester) I was even afraid of succeeding to the Preferment I sought for: 'Twas on the Stage alone I had form'd a Happiness preferable to all that Camps or Courts could offer me! and there was I determin'd, let Father and Mother take it as they pleas'd, to fix my *non ultra*. Here I think my self oblig'd, in respect to the Honour of that noble Lord, to acknowledge that I believe his real Intentions to do well for me were prevented by my own inconsiderate Folly; so that if my Life did not then take a more laudable Turn, I have no one but my self to reproach for it; for I was credibly inform'd by the Gentlemen of his Household, that his Grace had, in their hearing, talk'd of recommending me to the Lord Shrewsbury, then Secretary of State, for the first proper Vacancy in that Office. But the distant Hope of a Reversion was too cold a Temptation for a Spirit impatient as mine, that wanted immediate Possession of what my Heart was so differently set upon. The Allurements of a Theatre are still so strong in my Memory, that per-

haps few, except those who have felt them, can conceive: And I am yet so far willing to excuse my Folly, that I am convinc'd, were it possible to take off that Disgrace and Prejudice which Custom has thrown upon the Profession of an Actor, many a well-born younger Brother and Beauty of low Fortune would gladly have adorned the Theatre, who by their not being able to brook such Dishonour to their Birth, have pass'd away their Lives decently unheeded and forgotten.

Many Years ago, when I was first in the Management of the Theatre, I remember a strong Instance, which will shew you what degree of Ignominy the Profession of an Actor was then held at.—A Lady, with a real Title, whose female Indiscretions had occasion'd her Family to abandon her, being willing, in her Distress, to make an honest Penny of what Beauty she had left, desired to be admitted as an Actress; when before she could receive our Answer, a Gentleman (probably by her Relation's Permission) advis'd us not to entertain her, for Reasons easy to be guess'd. You may imagine we cou'd not be so blind to our Interest as to make an honourable Family our unnecessary Enemies by not taking his Advice; which the Lady, too, being sensible of, saw the Affair had its Difficulties, and therefore pursu'd it no farther. Now, is it not hard that it should be a doubt whether this Lady's Condition or ours were the more melancholy? For here you find her honest Endeavor to get Bread from the Stage was look'd upon as an Addition of new Scandal to her former Dishonour! so that I am afraid, according to this way of thinking, had the same Lady stoop'd to have sold Patches and Pomatum in a Band-box from Door to Door, she might in that Occupation have starv'd with less Infamy than had she reliev'd her Necessities by being famous on the Theatre. Whether this Prejudice may have arisen from the Abuses that so often have crept in upon the Stage, I am not clear in; tho' when that is grossly the Case, I will allow there ought to be no Limits set to the Contempt of it; yet in its lowest Condition in my time, methinks there could have been no Pretence of preferring the Band-box to the Buskin.[2] But this severe Opinion, whether merited or not, is not the greatest Distress that this Profession is liable to.

I shall now give you another Anecdote, quite the reverse of what I have instanc'd, wherein you will see an Actress as hardly us'd for

[2] Tragedy, from the buskin, or high boot, worn by tragic actors.

an Act of Modesty (which without being a Prude, a Woman, even upon the Stage, may sometimes think it necessary not to throw off.) This too I am forc'd to premise, that the Truth of what I am going to tell you may not be sneer'd at before it be known. About the Year 1717, a young Actress of a desirable Person, sitting in an upper Box at the Opera, a military Gentleman thought this a proper Opportunity to secure a little Conversation with her, the Particulars of which were probably no more worth repeating than it seems the *Damoiselle* then thought them worth listening to; for, notwithstanding the fine Things he said to her, she rather chose to give the Musick the Preference of her Attention: This Indifference was so offensive to his high Heart, that he began to change the Tender into the Terrible, and, in short, proceeded at last to treat her in a Style too grossly insulting for the meanest Female Ear to endure unresented: Upon which, being beaten too far out of her Discretion, she turn'd hastily upon him with an angry Look, and a Reply which seem'd to set his Merit in so low a Regard, that he thought himself oblig'd in Honour to take his time to resent it: This was the full Extent of her Crime, which his Glory delay'd no longer to punish than 'till the next time she was to appear upon the Stage: There, in one of her best Parts, wherein she drew a favourable Regard and Approbation from the Audience, he, dispensing with the Respect which some People think due to a polite Assembly, began to interrupt her Performance with such loud and various Notes of Mockery, as other young Men of Honour in the same Place have sometimes made themselves undauntedly merry with: Thus, deaf to all Murmurs or Entreaties of those about him, he pursued his Point, even to throwing near her such Trash as no Person can be suppos'd to carry about him unless to use on so particular an Occasion.

A Gentleman then behind the Scenes, being shock'd at his unmanly Behaviour, was warm enough to say, That no Man but a Fool or a Bully cou'd be capable of insulting an Audience or a Woman in so monstrous a manner. The former valiant Gentleman, to whose Ear the Words were soon brought by his Spies, whom he had plac'd behind the Scenes to observe how the Action was taken there, came immediately from the Pit in a Heat, and demanded to know of the Author of those Words if he was the Person that spoke them? to which he calmly reply'd, That though he had never seen

him before, yet, since he seem'd so earnest to be satisfy'd, he would do him the favour to own, That indeed the Words were his, and that they would be the last Words he should chuse to deny, whoever they might fall upon. To conclude, their Dispute was ended the next Morning in Hyde-Park, where the determin'd Combatant who first ask'd for Satisfaction was oblig'd afterwards to ask his Life too; whether he mended it or not, I have not yet heard; but his Antagonist in a few Years after died in one of the principal Posts of the Government.

Now, though I have sometimes known these gallant Insulters of Audiences draw themselves into Scrapes which they have less honourably got out of, yet, alas! what has that avail'd? This generous publick-spirited Method of silencing a few was but repelling the Disease in one Part to make it break out in another: All endeavors at Protection are new Provocations to those who pride themselves in pushing their Courage to a Defiance of Humanity. Even when a Royal Resentment has shewn itself in the behalf of an injur'd Actor, it has been unable to defend him from farther Insults! an Instance of which happen'd in the late King James's time. Mr. Smith (whose Character as a Gentleman could have been no way impeach'd had he not degraded it by being a celebrated Actor) had the Misfortune, in a Dispute with a Gentleman behind the Scenes, to receive a Blow from him: The same Night an Account of this Action was carry'd to the King, to whom the Gentleman was represented so grosly in the wrong, that the next Day his Majesty sent to forbid him the Court upon it. This Indignity cast upon a Gentleman only for having maltreated a Player, was look'd upon as the Concern of every Gentleman; and a Party was soon form'd to assert and vindicate their Honour, by humbling this favour'd Actor, whose slight Injury had been judg'd equal to so severe a Notice. Accordingly, the next time Smith acted he was receiv'd with a Chorus of Cat-calls, that soon convinc'd him he should not be suffer'd to proceed in his Part; upon which, without the least Discomposure, he order'd the Curtain to be dropp'd; and, having a competent Fortune of his own, thought the Conditions of adding to it by his remaining upon the Stage were too dear, and from that Day entirely quitted. I shall make no Observation upon the King's Resentment, or on that of his good Subjects; how far either was or was not right, is not

the Point I dispute for: Be that as it may, the unhappy Condition of the Actor was so far from being reliev'd by this Royal Interposition in his favour, that it was the worse for it.

While these sort of real Distresses on the Stage are so unavoidable, it is no wonder that young People of Sense (though of low Fortune) should be so rarely found to supply a Succession of good Actors. Why then may we not, in some measure, impute the Scarcity of them to the wanton Inhumanity of those Spectators, who have made it so terribly mean to appear there? Were there no ground for this Question, where could be the Disgrace of entring into a Society whose Institution, when not abus'd, is a delightful School of Morality; and where to excel requires as ample Endowments of Nature as any one Profession (that of holy Institution excepted) whatsoever? But, alas! as Shakspeare says,

Where's that Palace, whereinto, sometimes
Foul things intrude not? [3]

However, let us now turn to the other side of this Account, and see what Advantages stand there to balance the Misfortunes I have laid before you. There we shall find some valuable Articles of Credit, that sometimes overpay his incidental Disgraces.

First, if he has Sense, he will consider that as these Indignities are seldom or never offer'd him by People that are remarkable for any one good Quality, he ought not to lay them too close to his Heart: He will know too, that when Malice, Envy, or a brutal Nature, can securely hide or fence themselves in a Multitude, Virtue, Merit, Innocence, and even sovereign Superiority, have been, and must be equally liable to their Insults; that therefore, when they fall upon him in the same manner, his intrinsick Value cannot be diminished by them: On the contrary, if, with a decent and unruffled Temper, he lets them pass, the Disgrace will return upon his Aggressor, and perhaps warm the generous Spectator into a Partiality in his Favour.

That while he is conscious, That, as an Actor, he must be always in the Hands of Injustice, it does him at least this involuntary Good, that it keeps him in a settled Resolution to avoid all Occasions of

[3] As where's that palace whereinto foul things
Sometimes intrude not.—Othello, III, 3.

provoking it, or of even offending the lowest Enemy, who, at the expence of a Shilling, may publickly revenge it.

That, if he excells on the Stage, and is irreproachable in his Personal Morals and Behaviour, his Profession is so far from being an Impediment, that it will be oftner a just Reason for his being receiv'd among People of condition with Favour; and sometimes with a more social Distinction, than the best, though more profitable Trade he might have follow'd, could have recommended him to. . . .

That to have trod the Stage has not always been thought a Disqualification from more honourable Employments, several have had military Commissions; Carlisle and Wiltshire were both kill'd Captains; one in King William's Reduction of Ireland; and the other in his first War in Flanders; and the famous Ben. Johnson, tho' an unsuccessful Actor, was afterwards made Poet-Laureat.

To these laudable Distinctions let me add one more; that of Publick Applause, which, when truly merited, is perhaps one of the most agreeable Gratifications that venial Vanity can feel. A Happiness almost peculiar to the Actor, insomuch that the best Tragick Writer, however numerous his separate Admirers may be, yet, to unite them into one general Act of Praise, to receive at once those thundring Peals of Approbation which a crowded Theatre throws out, he must still call in the Assistance of the skilful Actor to raise and partake of them.

In a Word, 'twas in this flattering Light only, though not perhaps so thoroughly consider'd, I look'd upon the Life of an Actor when but eighteen Years of Age; nor can you wonder if the Temptations were too strong for so warm a Vanity as mine to resist; but whether excusable or not, to the Stage at length I came, and it is from thence, chiefly, your Curiosity, if you have any left, is to expect a farther Account of me.

Johnson's "Life of Pope"

Samuel Johnson (1709–1784), essayist, critic, and talker, is one of the best known characters in English literature, thanks to Boswell's life of him. Born in Lichfield, Staffordshire, where his father was a bookseller, he had his early schooling there, went to Oxford, returned home and taught a while, then trudged up to London and lived in the metropolis nearly sixty years. He is the author of numerous essays, published periodically as *The Rambler* and *The Idler,* compiler of the first comprehensive dictionary of the English language, editor of Shakespeare, writer of one romance, one play, several poems, many letters, and a group of biographies of the English poets. This last work of Johnson is upon the whole his best, rich in learning and ripe in wisdom. Sound sense, apt quotation, keen analysis of character, with anecdotal illustration acquired in some cases from living sources, make these critical narratives compare favorably with modern life-writing. The significant contribution of Johnson in the development of English biography has already been discussed in the introduction to this volume and needs merely to be referred to here. With his theory of biography, the central idea of which was that it should reveal the truth about a man, his practice was generally consistent; sometimes his prejudices led him astray, as in the case of Milton's poetry, but in the main his story of a human life is fair and discriminating. Alexander Pope (1688–1744), from whose biography the following selection is chosen, was an early contemporary of Johnson and the latter's sources of information were largely personal. Johnson particularly liked the kind of poetry Pope wrote with unequaled brilliancy—the rhyming couplet of satirical or didactic verse —and, like most readers of his day, regarded him as a very great poet. But Pope the poet was not so interesting as Pope the man, and it is Pope the man, deformed, diseased, irascible, querulous, sometimes treacherous, jealous, vain, devoted to his old mother, waspish, religious, and uncannily wise, that Johnson portrays with vividness and vigor. His account of Pope's poems, especially of his translation

of Homer, is a standard piece of literary criticism—something new in eighteenth-century biography—and serves to complete the picture of the foremost poet of his time. What makes *The Lives of the Poets* by Johnson such a fine example of biographical writing is the union of personal and professional delineation which produces in the mind of the reader a sense of reality.

[Johnson's *Life of Pope* has been carefully edited by Kate Stephens, New York, 1897.]

THE CHARACTER AND GENIUS OF POPE

The person of Pope is well known not to have been formed by the nicest model. He has, in his account of the "Little Club," compared himself to a spider, and by another is described as protuberant behind and before. He is said to have been beautiful in his infancy; but he was of a constitution originally feeble and weak; and, as bodies of a tender frame are easily distorted, his deformity was probably in part the effect of his application. His stature was so low, that, to bring him to a level with common tables, it was necessary to raise his seat. But his face was not displeasing, and his eyes were animated and vivid.

By natural deformity, or accidental distortion, his vital functions were so much disordered, that his life was a "long disease." His most frequent assailment was the headache, which he used to relieve by inhaling the steam of coffee, which he very frequently required.

Most of what can be told concerning his petty peculiarities was communicated by a female domestic of the Earl of Oxford, who knew him perhaps after the middle of life. He was then so weak as to stand in perpetual need of female attendance; extremely sensible of cold, so that he wore a kind of fur doublet, under a shirt of a very coarse warm linen with fine sleeves. When he rose, he was invested in bodice, made of stuff canvass, being scarcely able to hold himself erect till they were laced, and he then put on a flannel waistcoat. One side was contracted. His legs were so slender, that he enlarged their bulk with three pair of stockings, which were drawn on and off by the maid; for he was not able to dress or undress himself, and neither went to bed or rose without help. His weakness made it very difficult for him to be clean.

His hair had fallen almost all away; and he used to dine sometimes with Lord Oxford, privately, in a velvet cap. His dress of ceremony was black, with a tie-wig, and a little sword.

The indulgence and accommodation which his sickness required had taught him all the unpleasing and unsocial qualities of a valetudinary man. He expected that every thing should give way to

his ease or humor; as a child, whose parents will not hear her cry, has an unresisted dominion in the nursery.

C'est que l'enfant toujours est homme,
C'est que l'homme est toujours enfant.

When he wanted to sleep he "nodded in company;" and once slumbered at his own table while the Prince of Wales was talking of poetry.

The reputation which his friendship gave procured him many invitations; but he was a very troublesome inmate. He brought no servant, and had so many wants, that a numerous attendance was scarcely able to supply them. Wherever he was, he left no room for another, because he exacted the attention, and employed the activity of the whole family. His errands were so frequent and frivolous, that the footmen in time avoided and neglected him; and the Earl of Oxford discharged some of the servants for their resolute refusal of his messages. The maids, when they had neglected their business, alleged that they had been employed by Mr. Pope. One of his constant demands was of coffee in the night, and to the woman that waited on him in his chamber he was very burdensome; but he was careful to recompense her want of sleep; and Lord Oxford's servant declared, that in the house where her business was to answer his call, she would not ask for wages.

He had another fault easily incident to those who, suffering much pain, think themselves entitled to whatever pleasures they can snatch. He was too indulgent to his appetite; he loved meat highly seasoned and of strong taste; and, at the intervals of the table amused himself with biscuits and dry conserves. If he sat down to a variety of dishes, he would oppress his stomach with repletion; and, though he seemed angry when a dram was offered him, he did not forbear to drink it. His friends, who knew the avenues to his heart, pampered him with presents of luxury, which he did not suffer to stand neglected. The death of great men is not always proportioned to the lustre of their lives. Hannibal, says Juvenal, did not perish by the javelin or the sword; the slaughters of Cannae were revenged by a ring.[1] The death of Pope was imputed by some of his friends to a silver sauce-pan, in which it was his delight to heat potted lampreys.

[1] An allusion to the death of Hannibal by poison which he carried about with him in a ring.

That he loved too well to eat is certain; but that his sensuality shortened his life will not be hastily concluded, when it is remembered that a conformation so irregular lasted six and fifty years, notwithstanding such pertinacious diligence of study and meditation.

In all his intercourse with mankind, he had great delight in artifice, and endeavored to attain all his purposes by indirect and unsuspected methods. "He hardly drank tea without a stratagem." If, at the house of his friends, he wanted any accommodation, he was not willing to ask for it in plain terms, but would mention it remotely as something convenient; though when it was procured, he soon made it appear for whose sake it had been recommended. Thus he teased Lord Orrery till he obtained a screen. He practised his arts on such small occasions, that Lady Bolingbroke used to say, in a French phrase, that "he played the politician about cabbages and turnips." His unjustifiable impression of "The Patriot King," [2] as it can be imputed to no particular motive, must have proceeded from his general habit of secrecy and cunning: he caught an opportunity of a sly trick, and pleased himself with the thought of outwitting Bolingbroke.

In familiar or convivial conversation, it does not appear that he excelled. He may be said to have resembled Dryden, as being not one that was distinguished by vivacity in company. It is remarkable, that so near his time, so much should be known of what he has written, and so little of what he has said: traditional memory retains no sallies of raillery, nor sentences of observation; nothing either pointed or solid, either wise or merry. One apophthegm only stands upon record. When an objection, raised against his inscription for Shakspeare, was defended by the authority of Patrick,[3] he replied—*horresco referens*—that "he would allow the publisher of a dictionary to know the meaning of a single word, but not of two words put together."

He was fretful and easily displeased, and allowed himself to be

[2] Henry St. John, Viscount Bolingbroke, had presented a copy of his political pamphlet, *The Patriot King*, to Pope, who wished to have a very few copies made for his friends and promised that no more would be printed. Pope secretly had an edition, or "impression," of fifteen hundred copies printed. Bolingbroke regarded this as an act of treachery and indignantly burned the whole edition delivered to him by the printer after Pope's death.

[3] Samuel Patrick, editor of a Greek and Latin dictionary.

capriciously resentful. He would sometimes leave Lord Oxford silently, no one could tell why, and was to be courted back by more letters and messages than the footmen were willing to carry. The table was indeed infested by Lady Mary Wortley, who was the friend of Lady Oxford, and who, knowing his peevishness, could by no entreaties be restrained from contradicting him, till their disputes were sharpened to such asperity, that one or the other quitted the house.

He sometimes condescended to be jocular with servants or inferiors; but by no merriment, either of others or his own was he ever seen excited to laughter.

Of his domestic character, frugality was a part eminently remarkable. Having determined not to be dependant, he determined not to be in want, and therefore wisely and magnanimously rejected all temptations to expense unsuitable to his fortune. This general care must be universally approved; but it sometimes appeared in petty artifices of parsimony, such as the practice of writing his compositions on the back of letters, as may be seen in the remaining copy of the *Iliad,* by which perhaps in five years five shillings were saved; or in a niggardly reception of his friends, and scantiness of entertainment, as, when he had two guests in his house, he would set at supper a single pint upon the table and, having himself taken two small glasses, would retire, and say, "Gentlemen, I leave you to your wine." Yet he tells his friends, that "he has a heart for all, a house for all, and, whatever they may think, a fortune for all."

He sometimes, however, made a splendid dinner, and is said to have wanted no part of the skill or elegance which such performances require. That this magnificence should be often displayed, that obstinate prudence with which he conducted his affairs would not permit, for his revenue, certain and casual, amounted only to about eight hundred pounds a year, of which however he declares himself able to assign one hundred to charity.

Of this fortune, which, as it arose from public approbation, was very honourably obtained, his imagination seems to have been too full; it would be hard to find a man, so well entitled to notice by his wit, that ever delighted so much in talking of his money. In his letters and in his poems, his garden and his grotto, his quincunx and his vines, or some hints of his opulence, are always to be found. The great topic of his ridicule is poverty; the crimes with which he re-

proaches his antagonists are their debts, their habitation in the mint, and their want of a dinner. He seems to be of an opinion not very uncommon in the world, that to want money is to want every thing.

Next to the pleasure of contemplating his possessions, seems to be that of enumerating the men of high rank with whom he was acquainted, and whose notice he loudly proclaims not to have been obtained by any practices of meanness or servility; a boast which was never denied to be true, and to which very few poets have ever aspired. Pope never set his genius to sale, he never flattered those whom he did not love, or praised those whom he did not esteem. Savage [4] however remarked, that he began a little to relax his dignity when he wrote a distich for his "Highness's dog." [5]

His admiration of the great seems to have increased in the advance of life. He passed over peers and statesmen to inscribe his *Iliad* to Congreve, with a magnanimity of which the praise had been complete, had his friend's virtue been equal to his wit. Why he was chosen for so great an honour, it is not now possible to know; there is no trace in literary history of any particular intimacy between them. The name of Congreve appears in the letters among those of his other friends, but without any observable distinction or consequence.

To his latter works, however, he took care to annex names dignified with titles, but was not very happy in his choice: for, except Lord Bathurst, none of his noble friends were such as that a good man would wish to have his intimacy with them known to posterity; he can derive little honour from the notice of Cobham, Burlington, or Bolingbroke.

Of his social qualities, if an estimate be made from his letters, an opinion too favourable cannot easily be formed; they exhibit a perpetual and unclouded effulgence of general benevolence and particular fondness. There is nothing but liberality, gratitude, constancy, and tenderness. It has been so long said as to be commonly believed, that the true characters of men may be found in their letters, and that he who writes to his friend lays his heart open before him. But the truth is, that such were the simple friendships of the "Golden Age," and are now the friendships only of children. Very few can boast of hearts which they dare lay open to themselves, and of

[4] Richard Savage, an eighteenth-century poet and friend of Johnson.

[5] "I am his Highness' dog at Kew;
Pray tell me, sir, whose dog are you?"

which, by whatever accident exposed, they do not shun a distinct and continued view; and, certainly, what we hide from ourselves we do not shew to our friends. There is, indeed, no transaction which offers stronger temptations to fallacy and sophistication than epistolary intercourse. In the eagerness of conversation the first emotions of the mind often burst out before they are considered; in the tumult of business, interest and passion have their genuine effect; but a friendly letter is a calm and deliberate performance in the cool of leisure, in the stillness of solitude, and surely no man sits down to depreciate by design his own character.

Friendship has no tendency to secure veracity; for by whom can a man so much wish to be thought better than he is, as by him whose kindness he desires to gain or keep! Even in writing to the world there is less constraint; the author is not confronted with his reader, and takes his chance of approbation among the different dispositions of mankind; but a letter is addressed to a single mind, of which the prejudices and partialities are known; and must therefore please, if not by favouring them, by forbearing to oppose them.

To charge those favourable representations, which men give of their own minds, with the guilt of hypocritical falsehood, would shew more severity than knowledge. The writer commonly believes himself. Almost every man's thoughts, while they are general, are right; and most hearts are pure while temptation is away. It is easy to awaken generous sentiments in privacy; to despise death when there is no danger; to glow with benevolence when there is nothing to be given. While such ideas are formed, they are felt; and self-love does not suspect the gleam of virtue to be the meteor of fancy.

If the letters of Pope are considered merely as compositions, they seem to be premeditated and artificial. It is one thing to write, because there is something which the mind wishes to discharge; and another, to solicit the imagination, because ceremony or vanity require something to be written. Pope confesses his early letters to be vitiated with *affectation and ambition:* to know whether he disentangled himself from these perverters of epistolary integrity, his book and his life must be set in comparison.

One of his favourite topics is contempt of his own poetry. For this, if it had been real, he would deserve no commendation; and in this he was certainly not sincere, for his high value of himself was sufficiently observed; and of what could he be proud but of his poetry?

He writes, he says, when "he has just nothing else to do;" yet Swift complains that he was never at leisure for conversation, because he had "always some poetical scheme in his head." It was punctually required that his writing-box should be set upon his bed before he rose; the Lord Oxford's domestic related, that in the dreadful winter of forty, she was called from her bed by him four times in one night, to supply him with paper, lest he should lose a thought.

He pretends insensibility to censure and criticism, though it was observed by all who knew him that every pamphlet disturbed his quiet, and that his extreme irritability laid him open to perpetual vexation; but he wished to despise his critics, and therefore hoped that he did despise them.

As he happened to live in two reigns when the court paid little attention to poetry, he nursed in his mind a foolish disesteem of kings, and proclaims that "he never sees courts." Yet a little regard shewn him by the Prince of Wales melted his obduracy; and he had not much to say when he was asked by his royal highness, "How he could love a prince while he disliked kings?" [6]

He very frequently professes contempt of the world, and represents himself as looking on mankind, sometimes with gay indifference, as on emmets of a hillock, below his serious attention, and sometimes with gloomy indignation, as on monsters more worthy of hatred than of pity. These were dispositions apparently counterfeited. How could he despise those whom he lived by pleasing, and on whose approbation his esteem of himself was superstructed? Why should he hate those to whose favour he owed his honour and his ease? Of things that terminate in human life, the world is the proper judge; to despise its sentence, if it were possible, is not just; and if it were just, is not possible. Pope was far enough from this unreasonable temper: he was sufficiently a *fool to Fame,* and his fault was, that he pretended to neglect it. His levity and his sullenness were only in his letters; he passed through common life, sometimes vexed, and sometimes pleased, with the natural emotions of common men.

His scorn of the great is too often repeated to be real; no man thinks much of that which he despises; and as falsehood is always in

[6] Boswell, in his *Life of Johnson,* says that he was told by John Wilkes that Pope's reply to this question of the Prince of Wales was: "The young lion is harmless, and even playful; but when his claws are full grown he becomes cruel, dreadful, and mischievous."

danger of inconsistency, he makes it his boast at another time that he lives among them.

It is evident that his own importance swells often in his mind. He is afraid of writing, lest the clerks of the post-office should know his secrets; he has many enemies; he considers himself as surrounded by universal jealousy; "after many deaths and many dispersions, two or three of us," says he, "may still be brought together, not to plot, but to divert ourselves, and the world too, if it pleases;" and they can live together, and "shew what friends wits may be, in spite of all the fools in the world." All this while it was likely that the clerks did not know his hand; he certainly had no more enemies than a public character like his inevitably excites; and with what degree of friendship the wits might live, very few were so much fools as ever to inquire.

Some part of this pretended discontent he learned from Swift, and expresses it, I think, most frequently in his correspondence with him. Swift's resentment was unreasonable, but it was sincere; Pope's was the mere mimicry of his friend, a fictitious part which he began to play before it became him. When he was only twenty-five years old, he related that "a glut of study and retirement had thrown him on the world," and that there was danger lest "a glut of the world should throw him back upon study and retirement." To this Swift answered with great propriety, that Pope had not yet acted or suffered enough in the world to have become weary of it. And, indeed, it must have been some very powerful reason that can drive back to solitude him who has once enjoyed the pleasures of society.

In the letters both of Swift and Pope there appears such narrowness of mind, as makes them insensible of any excellence that has not some affinity with their own, and confines their esteem and approbation to so small a number, that whoever should form his opinion of the age from their representation, would suppose them to have lived amidst ignorance and barbarity, unable to find among their contemporaries either virtue or intelligence, and persecuted by those that could not understand them.

When Pope murmurs at the world, when he professes contempt of fame, when he speaks of riches and poverty, of success and disappointment, with negligent indifference, he certainly does not express his habitual and settled sentiments, but either wilfully disguises his own character, or, what is more likely, invests himself

with temporary qualities, and sallies out in the colours of the present moment. His hopes and fears, his joys and sorrows, acted strongly upon his mind; and, if he differed from others, it was not by carelessness; he was irritable and resentful; his malignity to Philips,[7] whom he had first made ridiculous, and then hated for being angry, continued too long. Of his vain desire to make Bentley [8] contemptible, I never heard any adequate reason. He was sometimes wanton in his attacks; and before Chandos, Lady Wortley, and Hill, was mean in his retreat.

The virtues which seem to have had most of his affection were liberality and fidelity of friendship, in which it does not appear that he was other than he describes himself. His fortune did not suffer his charity to be splendid and conspicuous; but he assisted Dodsley with a hundred pounds, that he might open a shop; and of the subscription of forty pounds a year that he raised for Savage, twenty were paid by himself. He was accused of loving money; but his love was eagerness to gain, not solicitude to keep it.

In the duties of friendship he was zealous and constant; his early maturity of mind commonly united him with men older than himself, and therefore, without attaining any considerable length of life, he saw many companions of his youth sink into the grave; but it does not appear that he lost a single friend by coldness or by injury; those who loved him once, continued their kindness. His ungrateful mention of Allen [9] in his will was the effect of his adherence to one whom he had known much longer,[10] and whom he naturally loved with greater fondness. His violation of the trust reposed in him by Bolingbroke could have no motive inconsistent with the warmest affection; he either thought the action so near to indifferent that he forgot it, or so laudable that he expected his friend to approve it.

It was reported, with such confidence as almost to enforce belief, that in the papers entrusted to his executors was found a defamatory *Life of Swift,* which he had prepared as an instrument of vengeance,

[7] Ambrose Philips was a poet and playwright.

[8] Richard Bentley, English classical scholar, who said to Pope, in reply to a question as to whether he had received a copy of his translation of Homer: "A very pretty poem, Mr. Pope, but you must not call it Homer."

[9] Ralph Allen, a munificent patron of literature, lived at Prior Park near Bath. He entertained Pope, Fielding, and other literary men of the day.

[10] Miss Blount, the friend and admirer of Pope, whose cold reception by the Allens had greatly offended him.

to be used if any provocation should ever be given. About this I inquired of the Earl of Marchmont, who assured me that no such piece was among his remains.

The religion in which he lived and died was that of the church of Rome, to which in his correspondence with Racine he professes himself a sincere adherent. That he was not scrupulously pious in some part of his life, is known by many idle and indecent applications of sentences taken from the scriptures; a mode of merriment which a good man dreads for its profaneness, and a witty man disdains for its easiness and vulgarity. But to whatever levities he has been betrayed, it does not appear that his principles were ever corrupted, or that he ever lost his belief of revelation. The positions which he transmitted from Bolingbroke he seems not to have understood, and was pleased with an interpretation that made them orthodox.

A man of such exalted superiority, and so little moderation, would naturally have all his delinquencies observed and aggravated; those who could not deny that he was excellent, would rejoice to find that he was not perfect.

Perhaps it may be imputed to the unwillingness with which the same man is allowed to possess many advantages, that his learning has been depreciated. He certainly was, in his early life, a man of great literary curiosity; and, when he wrote his "Essay on Criticism," had, for his age, a very wide acquaintance with books. When he entered into the living world, it seems to have happened to him as to many others, that he was less attentive to dead masters; he studied in the academy of Paracelsus, and made the universe his favourite volume. He gathered his notions fresh from reality, not from the copies of authors, but the originals of nature. Yet there is no reason to believe that literature ever lost his esteem; he always professed to love reading; and Dobson, who spent some time at his house translating his "Essay on Man," when I asked him what learning he found him to possess, answered, "More than I expected." His frequent references to history, his allusions to various kinds of knowledge, and his images selected from art and nature, with his observations on the operations of the mind and the modes of life, shew an intelligence perpetually on the wing, excursive, vigorous, and diligent, eager to pursue knowledge, and attentive to retain it.

From this curiosity arose the desire of travelling, to which he alludes in his verses to Jervas,[11] and which, though he never found an opportunity to gratify it, did not leave him till his life declined.

Of his intellectual character, the constituent and fundamental principle was good sense, a prompt and intuitive perception of consonance and propriety. He saw immediately, of his own conceptions, what was to be chosen, and what to be rejected; and, in the works of others, what was to be shunned, and what was to be copied.

But good sense alone is a sedate and quiescent quality, which manages its possessions well, but does not increase them; it collects few materials for its own operations, and preserves safety, but never gains supremacy. Pope had likewise genius; a mind active, ambitious, and adventurous, always investigating, always aspiring; in its widest searches still longing to go forward, in its highest flights still wishing to be higher; always imagining something greater than it knows, always endeavouring more than it can do.

To assist these powers, he is said to have had great strength and exactness of memory. That which he had heard or read was not easily lost; and he had before him not only what his own meditations suggested, but what he had found in other writers that might be accommodated to his present purpose.

These benefits of nature he improved by incessant and unwearied diligence; he had recourse to every source of intelligence, and lost no opportunity of information; he consulted the living as well as the dead; he read his compositions to his friends, and was never content with mediocrity when excellence could be attained. He considered poetry as the business of his life; and, however he might seem to lament his occupation, he followed it with constancy; to make verses was his first labour, and to mend them was his last.

From his attention to poetry he was never diverted. If conversation offered any thing that could be improved, he committed it to paper; if a thought, or perhaps an expression more happy than was common, rose to his mind, he was careful to write it; an independent distich was preserved for an opportunity of insertion; and some little fragments have been found containing lines, or parts of lines, to be wrought upon at some other time.

He was one of those few whose labour is their pleasure: he was never elevated to negligence, nor wearied to impatience; he never

[11] Charles Jervas was an Irish painter to whom Pope wrote some verses.

passed a fault unamended by indifference, nor quitted it by despair. He laboured his works, first to gain reputation, and afterwards to keep it.

Of composition there are different methods. Some employ at once memory and invention, and, with little intermediate use of the pen, form and polish large masses by continued meditation, and write their productions only when, in their own opinion, they have completed them. It is related of Virgil, that his custom was to pour out a great number of verses in the morning, and pass the day in retrenching exuberances, and correcting inaccuracies. The method of Pope, as may be collected from his translation, was to write his first thoughts in his first words, and gradually to amplify, decorate, rectify, and refine them.

With such faculties, and such disposition, he excelled every other writer in poetical prudence: he wrote in such a manner as might expose him to few hazards. He used almost always the same fabric of verse; and, indeed, by those few essays which he made of any other, he did not enlarge his reputation. Of this uniformity the certain consequence was readiness and dexterity. By perpetual practice, language had, in his mind, a systematical arrangement; having always the same use for words, he had words so selected and combined as to be ready at his call. This increase of facility he confessed himself to have perceived in the progress of his translation.

But what was yet of more importance, his effusions were always voluntary, and his subjects chosen by himself. His independence secured him from drudging at a task, and labouring upon a barren topic; he never exchanged praise for money, nor opened a shop of condolence or congratulation. His poems, therefore, were scarcely ever temporary. He suffered coronations and royal marriages to pass without a song; and derived no opportunities from recent events, or any popularity from the accidental disposition of his readers. He was never reduced to the necessity of soliciting the sun to shine upon a birth-day, of calling the graces and virtues to a wedding, or of saying what multitudes have said before him. When he could produce nothing new, he was at liberty to be silent.

His publications were for the same reason never hasty. He is said to have sent nothing to the press till it had lain two years under his inspection; it is at least certain, that he ventured nothing without nice examination. He suffered the tumult of imagination to subside,

and the novelties of invention to grow familiar. He knew that the mind is always enamoured of its own productions, and did not trust his first fondness. He consulted his friends, and listened with great willingness to criticism; and, what was of more importance, he consulted himself, and let nothing pass against his own judgment.

He professed to have learned his poetry from Dryden, whom, whenever an opportunity was presented, he praised through his whole life with unvaried liberality; and perhaps his character may receive some illustration, if he be compared with his master.

Integrity of understanding and nicety of discernment were not allotted in a less proportion to Dryden than to Pope. The rectitude of Dryden's mind was sufficiently shewn by the dismission of his poetical prejudices, and the rejection of unnatural thoughts and rugged numbers. But Dryden never desired to apply all the judgment that he had. He wrote, and professed to write, merely for the people; and when he pleased others, he contented himself. He spent no time in struggles to rouse latent powers; he never attempted to make that better which was already good, nor often to mend what he must have know to be faulty. He wrote, as he tells us, with very little consideration; when occasion or necessity called upon him, he poured out what the present moment happened to supply, and, when once it had passed the press, ejected it from his mind; for, when he had no pecuniary interest, he had no further solicitude.

Pope was not content to satisfy, he desired to excel; and therefore always endeavoured to do his best; he did not court the candour, but dared the judgment, of his reader, and, expecting no indulgence from others, he shewed none to himself. He examined lines and words with minute and punctilious observation, and retouched every part with indefatigable diligence, till he had left nothing to be forgiven.

For this reason he kept his pieces very long in his hands, while he considered and reconsidered them. The only poems which can be supposed to have been written with such regard to the times as might hasten their publication, were the two satires of "Thirty-eight;" of which Dodsley told me that they were brought to him by the author, that they might be fairly copied. "Almost every line," he said, "was then written twice over; I gave him a clean transcript, which he sent some time afterwards to me for the press, with almost every line written twice over a second time."

His declaration, that his care for his works ceased at their publication, was not strictly true. His parental attention never abandoned them; what he found amiss in the first edition, he silently corrected in those that followed. He appears to have revised the "Iliad," and freed it from some of its imperfections; and the "Essay on Criticism" received many improvements after its first appearance. It will seldom be found that he altered without adding clearness, elegance, or vigour. Pope had perhaps the judgment of Dryden; but Dryden certainly wanted the diligence of Pope.

In acquired knowledge, the superiority must be allowed to Dryden, whose education was more scholastic, and who before he became an author had been allowed more time for study, with better means of information. His mind has a larger range, and he collects his images and illustrations from a more extensive circumference of science. Dryden knew more of man in his general nature, and Pope in his local manners. The notions of Dryden were formed by comprehensive speculation; and those of Pope by minute attention. There is more dignity in the knowledge of Dryden, and more certainty in that of Pope.

Poetry was not the sole praise of either; for both excelled likewise in prose; but Pope did not borrow his prose from his predecessor. The style of Dryden is capricious and varied; that of Pope is cautious and uniform. Dryden observes the motions of his own mind; Pope constrains his mind to his own rules of composition. Dryden is sometimes vehement and rapid; Pope is always smooth, uniform and gentle. Dryden's page is a natural field, rising into inequalities, and diversified by the varied exuberance of abundant vegetation; Pope's is a velvet lawn, shaven by the scythe, and levelled by the roller.

Of genius, that power which constitutes a poet; that quality without which judgment is cold, and knowledge is inert; that energy which collects, combines, amplifies, and animates; the superiority must, with some hesitation, be allowed to Dryden. It is not to be inferred, that of this poetical vigour Pope had only a little, because Dryden had more; for every other writer since Milton must give place to Pope; and even of Dryden it must be said, that, if he has brighter paragraphs, he has not better poems. Dryden's performances were always hasty, either excited by some external occasion, or extorted by domestic necessity; he composed without considera-

tion, and published without correction. What his mind could supply at call, or gather in one excursion, was all that he sought, and all that he gave. The dilatory caution of Pope enabled him to condense his sentiments, to multiply his images, and to accumulate all that study might produce, or chance might supply. If the flights of Dryden therefore are higher, Pope continues longer on the wing. If of Dryden's fire the blaze is brighter, of Pope's the heat is more regular and constant. Dryden often surpasses expectation, and Pope never falls below it. Dryden is read with frequent astonishment, and Pope with perpetual delight. . . .

After all this, it is surely superfluous to answer the question that has once been asked, whether Pope was a poet; otherwise than by asking in return, if Pope be not a poet, where is poetry to be found? To circumscribe poetry by a definition will only shew the narrowness of the definer, though a definition which shall exclude Pope will not easily be made. Let us look round upon the present time, and back upon the past: let us inquire to whom the voice of mankind has decreed the wreath of poetry; let their productions be examined, and their claims stated, and the pretensions of Pope will be no more disputed.

Boswell's "Life of Johnson"

James Boswell (1740–1795) came of an old family belonging to the landed gentry of Scotland whose ancestral seat is near Auchinleck, Ayrshire. Though born and educated in Edinburgh, he had greater affection for London, where he spent some of the happiest and most fruitful years of his life. The practice of the law, which he had studied both at home and abroad, was with him a secondary pursuit, neglected and resumed as the tide of his social and literary interests flowed and ebbed. Law was his profession but converse with gifted men and women was his passion. Gay, convivial, witty, and occasionally naïf, Boswell made such fine sport in company that his reputation as a good fellow led his contemporaries as well as certain later critics to underrate his great abilities. He has been called weak, vain, and foolish, toadying to celebrities and basking in the sunshine of their infrequent favors. Foolish he doubtless often was, but not a fool. Through the investigations of modern scholars and the publication in 1929 of a multitude of documents long hidden away in the Boswell family archives, his amazing industry in keeping journals, his extraordinary care in preserving notebooks and letters, his keen intelligence, and the range of his information, have been made more evident. In the newer estimates of Boswell, emphasis has been shifted from his weaknesses, long known, to his virtues, some of which were obscured for lack of exact knowledge. Boswell met Samuel Johnson in 1763, as recorded in a famous passage quoted below. He was twenty-three and Johnson was fifty-four. For twenty-one years Boswell spent much time with his great friend. He became a member of Johnson's Literary Club where he talked with Burke, Gibbon, Goldsmith, Sir Joshua Reynolds, and other eminent men; he walked and ate with Johnson; he went with him on a long tour in Scotland and the Hebrides; he had many letters from him; he asked the old scholar innumerable questions, discussed almost endless themes with him, was rebuked, laughed at, and loved by him; and a year or so after his

master's death in 1784, he began a biography of the man whose conversation, peculiarities, and wisdom he had noted down through a score of years. Boswell's own journals and commonplace books, recollections communicated by Johnson's friends, and Johnson's letters and reminiscences were the sources of the biography, published in 1791. The account of the fifty-four years of Johnson's life before Boswell knew him covers about one fifth of the large work; the record of the twenty Boswellian years, four-fifths, is said actually to include two hundred and seventy-six days of the period. Boswell eliminated, selected, and skilfully combined his material, evidently rejecting much and carefully editing what he decided to use. In general, he constructed his *Life of Johnson* with such coherence, unity, and clearness of portraiture, that it has impressed generations of readers as the truthful history of an interesting/personality by a man who had an unsurpassed genius for observing, recording, and presenting conversation and character.

[The standard edition of Boswell's *Life of Johnson* is G. Birbeck Hill's, London, 1887, 6 vols.]

BOSWELL IS INTRODUCED TO JOHNSON

At last, on Monday the 16th of May, [1763], when I was sitting in Mr. Davies's back-parlour, after having drunk tea with him and Mrs. Davies, Johnson unexpectedly came into the shop; and Mr. Davies having perceived him through the glass-door in the room in which we were sitting, advancing towards us,—he announced his aweful approach to me, somewhat in the manner of an actor in the part of Horatio, when he addresses Hamlet on the appearance of his father's ghost, "Look, my Lord, it comes." I found that I had a very perfect idea of Johnson's figure, from the portrait of him painted by Sir Joshua Reynolds soon after he had published his *Dictionary,* in the attitude of sitting in his easy chair in deep meditation, which was the first picture his friend did for him, which Sir Joshua very kindly presented to me, and from which an engraving has been made for this work. Mr. Davies mentioned my name, and respectfully introduced me to him. I was much agitated; and recollecting his prejudice against the Scotch, of which I had heard much, I said to Davies, "Don't tell where I come from."—"From Scotland," cried Davies roguishly. "Mr. Johnson, (said I) I do indeed come from Scotland, but I cannot help it." I am willing to flatter myself that I meant this as light pleasantry to sooth and conciliate him, and not as an humiliating abasement at the expence of my country. But however that might be, this speech was somewhat unlucky; for with that quickness of wit for which he was so remarkable, he seized the expression "come from Scotland," which I used in the sense of being of that country; and, as if I had said that I had come away from it, or left it, retorted, "That, Sir, I find, is what a very great many of your countrymen cannot help." This stroke stunned me a good deal; and when we had sat down, I felt myself not a little embarrassed, and apprehensive of what might come next. He then addressed himself to Davies: "What do you think of Garrick? He has refused me an order for the play for Miss Williams, because he knows the house will be full, and that an order would be worth three shillings." Eager to take any open-

ing to get into conversation with him, I ventured to say, "O, Sir, I cannot think Mr. Garrick would grudge such a trifle to you." "Sir, (said he, with a stern look,) I have known David Garrick longer than you have done: and I know no right you have to talk to me on the subject." Perhaps I deserved this check; for it was rather presumptuous in me, an entire stranger, to express any doubt of the justice of his animadversion upon his old acquaintance and pupil.* I now felt myself much mortified, and began to think that the hope which I had long indulged of obtaining his acquaintance was blasted. And, in truth, had not my ardour been uncommonly strong, and my resolution uncommonly persevering, so rough a reception might have deterred me for ever from making any further attempts. Fortunately, however, I remained upon the field not wholly discomfited . . .

I was highly pleased with the extraordinary vigour of his conversation, and regretted that I was drawn away from it by an engagement at another place. I had, for a part of the evening, been left alone with him, and had ventured to make an observation now and then, which he received very civilly; so that I was satisfied that though there was a roughness in his manner, there was no ill-nature in his disposition. Davies followed me to the door, and when I complained to him a little of the hard blows which the great man had given me, he kindly took upon him to console me by saying, "Don't be uneasy. I can see he likes you very well."

A few days afterwards I called on Davies, and asked him if he thought I might take the liberty of waiting on Mr. Johnson at his Chambers in the Temple. He said I certainly might, and that Mr. Johnson would take it as a compliment. So upon Tuesday the 24th of May, after having been enlivened by the witty sallies of Messieurs Thornton, Wilkes, Churchill and Lloyd, with whom I had passed the morning, I boldly repaired to Johnson. His Chambers were on the first floor of No. 1, Inner-Temple-lane, and I entered them with an impression given me by the Reverend Dr. Blair, of Edinburgh, who had been introduced to him not long before, and described

* That this was a momentary sally against Garrick there can be no doubt; for at Johnson's desire he had, some years before, given a benefit-night at his theatre to this very person, by which she had got two hundred pounds. Johnson, indeed, upon all other occasions, when I was in his company, praised the very liberal charity of Garrick. I once mentioned to him, "It is observed, Sir, that you attack Garrick yourself, but will suffer nobody else to do it." JOHNSON, (smiling) "Why, Sir, that is true."—BOSWELL'S NOTE.

his having "found the Giant in his den;" an expression, which, when I came to be pretty well acquainted with Johnson, I repeated to him, and he was diverted at this picturesque account of himself. . . .

He received me very courteously; but, it must be confessed, that his apartment, and furniture, and morning dress, were sufficiently uncouth. His brown suit of cloaths looked very rusty; he had on a little old shrivelled unpowdered wig, which was too small for his head; his shirt-neck and knees of his breeches were loose; his black worsted stockings ill drawn up; and he had a pair of unbuckled shoes by way of slippers. But all these slovenly particularities were forgotten the moment that he began to talk. Some gentlemen, whom I do not recollect, were sitting with him; and when they went away, I also rose; but he said to me, "Nay, don't go." "Sir, (said I,) I am afraid that I intrude upon you. It is benevolent to allow me to sit and hear you." He seemed pleased with this compliment, which I sincerely paid him, and answered, "Sir, I am obliged to any man who visits me." . . .

When I rose a second time he again pressed me to stay, which I did.

He told me, that he generally went abroad at four in the afternoon, and seldom came home till two in the morning. I took the liberty to ask if he did not think it wrong to live thus, and not make more use of his great talents. He owned it was a bad habit. On reviewing, at the distance of many years, my journal of this period, I wonder how, at my first visit, I ventured to talk to him so freely, and that he bore it with so much indulgence.

Before we parted, he was so good as to promise to favour me with his company one evening at my lodgings; and, as I took my leave, shook me cordially by the hand. It is almost needless to add, that I felt no little elation at having now so happily established an acquaintance of which I had been so long ambitious.

THE DICTIONARY AND THE LETTER TO LORD CHESTERFIELD

The year 1747 is distinguished as the epoch, when Johnson's arduous and important work, his *"Dictionary of the English Lan-*

guage," was announced to the world, by the publication of its Plan or *Prospectus.*

How long this immense undertaking had been the object of his contemplation, I do not know. I once asked him by what means he had attained to that astonishing knowledge of our language, by which he was enabled to realise a design of such extent and accumulated difficulty. He told me, that "it was not the effect of particular study; but that it had grown up in his mind insensibly." I have been informed by Mr. James Dodsley, that several years before this period, when Johnson was one day sitting in his brother Robert's shop, he heard his brother suggest to him, that a Dictionary of the English Language would be a work that would be well received by the publick; that Johnson seemed at first to catch at the proposition, but, after a pause, said, in his abrupt decisive manner, "I believe I shall not undertake it." That he, however, had bestowed much thought upon the subject, before he published his *Plan,* is evident from the enlarged, clear, and accurate views which it exhibits; and we find him mentioning in that tract, that many of the writers whose testimonies were to be produced as authorities, were selected by Pope; which proves that he had been furnished, probably by Mr. Robert Dodsley, with whatever hints that eminent poet had contributed towards a great literary project, that had been the subject of important consideration in a former reign.

The booksellers who contracted with Johnson, single and unaided, for the execution of a work, which in other countries has not been effected but by the co-operating exertions of many, were Mr. Robert Dodsley, Mr. Charles Hitch, Mr. Andrew Millar, the two Messieurs Longman, and the two Messieurs Knapton. The price stipulated was fifteen hundred and seventy-five pounds.

The *Plan* was addressed to Philip Dormer, Earl of Chesterfield, then one of his Majesty's Principal Secretaries of State; a nobleman who was very ambitious of literary distinction, and who, upon being informed of the design, had expressed himself in terms very favourable to its success. There is, perhaps in every thing of any consequence, a secret history which it would be amusing to know, could we have it authentically communicated. Johnson told me, "Sir, the way in which the *Plan* of my *Dictionary* came to be inscribed to Lord Chesterfield, was this: I had neglected to write it by the time appointed. Dodsley suggested a desire to have it addressed to Lord

Chesterfield. I laid hold of this as a pretext for delay, that it might be better done, and let Dodsley have his desire. I said to my friend, Dr. Bathurst, 'Now if any good comes of my addressing to Lord Chesterfield, it will be ascribed to deep policy, when, in fact, it was only a casual excuse for laziness.'" . . .

Lord Chesterfield, to whom Johnson had paid the high compliment of addressing to his Lordship the *Plan* of his *Dictionary,* had behaved to him in such a manner as to excite his contempt and indignation. The world has been for many years amused with a story confidently told, and as confidently repeated with additional circumstances, that a sudden disgust was taken by Johnson upon occasion of his having been one day kept long in waiting in his Lordship's antechamber, for which the reason assigned was, that he had company with him; and that at last, when the door opened, out walked Colley Cibber; [1] and that Johnson was so violently provoked when he found for whom he had been so long excluded, that he went away in a passion, and never would return. I remember having mentioned this story to George Lord Lyttelton, who told me, he was very intimate with Lord Chesterfield; and holding it as a well-known truth, defended Lord Chesterfield, by saying, that "Cibber, who had been introduced familiarly by the back-stairs, had probably not been there above ten minutes." It may seem strange even to entertain a doubt concerning a story so long and so widely current, and thus implicitly adopted, if not sanctioned, by the authority which I have mentioned; but Johnson himself assured me, that there was not the least foundation for it. He told me, that there never was any particular incident which produced a quarrel between Lord Chesterfield and him; but that his Lordship's continued neglect was the reason why he resolved to have no connection with him. When the *Dictionary* was upon the eve of publication, Lord Chesterfield, who, it is said, had flattered himself with expectations that Johnson would dedicate the work to him, attempted, in a courtly manner, to sooth, and insinuate himself with the Sage, conscious, as it should seem, of the cold indifference with which he had treated its learned authour; and further attempted to conciliate him, by writing two papers in *The World,* in recommendation of the work; and it must be confessed, that they contain some studied compliments, so finely turned, that if there had been no

[1] Colley Cibber (1671–1757), actor, dramatist, and poet-laureate. See page 91.

previous offence, it is probable that Johnson would have been highly delighted. Praise, in general, was pleasing to him; but by praise from a man of rank and elegant accomplishments, he was peculiarly gratified. . . .

This courtly device failed of its effect. Johnson, who thought that "all was false and hollow," despised the honeyed words, and was even indignant that Lord Chesterfield should, for a moment, imagine that he could be the dupe of such an artifice. His expression to me concerning Lord Chesterfield, upon this occasion, was, "Sir, after making great professions, he had, for many years, taken no notice of me; but when my *Dictionary* was coming out, he fell a scribbling in *The World* about it. Upon which, I wrote him a letter expressed in civil terms, but such as might shew him that I did not mind what he said or wrote, and that I had done with him."

This is that celebrated letter of which so much has been said, and about which curiosity has been so long excited, without being gratified. I for many years solicited Johnson to favour me with a copy of it, that so excellent a composition might not be lost to posterity. He delayed from time to time to give it me; till at last in 1781, when we were on a visit at Mr. Dilly's, at Southill in Bedfordshire, he was pleased to dictate it to me from memory. He afterwards found among his papers a copy of it, which he had dictated to Mr. Baretti, with its title and corrections, in his own handwriting. This he gave to Mr. Langton; adding that if it were to come into print, he wished it to be from that copy. By Mr. Langton's kindness, I am enabled to enrich my work with a perfect transcript of what the world has so eagerly desired to see.

"To the Right Honourable the Earl of Chesterfield.

"February 7, 1755.

"My Lord, I have been lately informed, by the proprietor of *The World,* that two papers, in which my Dictionary is recommended to the publick, were written by your Lordship. To be so distinguished, is an honour, which, being very little accustomed to favours from the great, I know not well how to receive, or in what terms to acknowledge.

"When, upon some slight encouragement, I first visited your Lordship, I was overpowered, like the rest of mankind, by the enchantment of your address; and could not forbear to wish that I

might boast myself *Le vainqueur du vainqueur de la terre;*—that I might obtain that regard for which I saw the world contending; but I found my attendance so little encouraged, that neither pride nor modesty would suffer me to continue it. When I had once addressed your Lordship in publick, I had exhausted all the art of pleasing which a retired and uncourtly scholar can possess. I had done all that I could; and no man is well pleased to have his all neglected, be it ever so little.

"Seven years, my Lord, have now past, since I waited in your outward rooms, or was repulsed from your door; during which time I have been pushing on my work through difficulties, of which it is useless to complain, and have brought it, at last, to the verge of publication, without one act of assistance, one word of encouragement, or one smile of favour. Such treatment I did not expect, for I never had a Patron before.

"The shepherd in Virgil grew at last acquainted with Love, and found him a native of the rocks.

"Is not a Patron, my Lord, one who looks with unconcern on a man struggling for life in the water, and, when he has reached ground, encumbers him with help? The notice which you have been pleased to take of my labours, had it been early, had been kind; but it has been delayed till I am indifferent, and cannot enjoy it; till I am solitary, and cannot impart it; till I am known, and do not want it. I hope it is no very cynical asperity not to confess obligations where no benefit has been received, or to be unwilling that the Publick should consider me as owing that to a Patron, which Providence has enabled me to do for myself.

"Having carried on my work thus far with so little obligation to any favourer of learning, I shall not be disappointed though I should conclude it, if less be possible, with less; for I have been long wakened from that dream of hope, in which I once boasted myself with so much exultation, my Lord, your Lordship's most humble, most obedient servant,

"SAM JOHNSON."

"While this was the talk of the town, (says Dr. Adams, in a letter to me) I happened to visit Dr. Warburton, who finding that I was acquainted with Johnson, desired me earnestly to carry his compliments to him, and to tell him, that he honoured him for his manly

behaviour in rejecting these condescensions of Lord Chesterfield, and for resenting the treatment he had received from him, with a proper spirit. Johnson was visibly pleased with this compliment, for he had always a high opinion of Warburton. Indeed, the force of mind which appeared in this letter, was congenial with that which Warburton himself amply possessed."

There is a curious minute circumstance which struck me, in comparing the various editions of Johnson's imitations of Juvenal. In the tenth Satire, one of the couplets upon the vanity of wishes even for literary distinction stood thus:

"Yet think what ills the scholar's life assail,
Pride, envy, want, the *garret,* and the jail."

But after experiencing the uneasiness which Lord Chesterfield's fallacious patronage made him feel, he dismissed the word *garret* from the sad group, and in all the subsequent editions the line stands

"Pride, envy, want, the *Patron,* and the jail."

JOHNSON'S TALK WITH THE KING

In February, 1767, there happened one of the most remarkable incidents of Johnson's life, which gratified his monarchical enthusiasm, and which he loved to relate with all its circumstances, when requested by his friends. This was his being honoured by a private conversation with his Majesty,[2] in the library at the Queen's house. He had frequently visited those splendid rooms and noble collection of books, which he used to say was more numerous and curious than he supposed any person could have made in the time which the King had employed. Mr. Barnard, the librarian, took care that he should have every accommodation that could contribute to his ease and convenience, while indulging his literary taste in that place; so that he had here a very agreeable resource at leisure hours.

His Majesty having been informed of his occasional visits, was pleased to signify a desire that he should be told when Dr. Johnson came next to the library. Accordingly, the next time that Johnson did come, as soon as he was fairly engaged with a book, on which,

[2] George III.

while he sat by the fire, he seemed quite intent, Mr. Barnard stole round to the apartment where the King was, and, in obedience to his Majesty's commands, mentioned that Dr. Johnson was then in the library. His Majesty said he was at leisure, and would go to him; upon which Mr. Barnard took one of the candles that stood on the King's table, and lighted his Majesty through a suite of rooms, till they came to a private door into the library, of which his Majesty had the key. Being entered, Mr. Barnard stepped forward hastily to Dr. Johnson, who was still in a profound study, and whispered him, "Sir, here is the King." Johnson started up, and stood still. His Majesty approached him, and at once was courteously easy.

His Majesty began by observing, that he understood he came sometimes to the library; and then mentioning his having heard that the Doctor had been lately at Oxford, asked him if he was not fond of going thither. To which Johnson answered, that he was indeed fond of going to Oxford sometimes, but was likewise glad to come back again. The King then asked him what they were doing at Oxford. Johnson answered, he could not much commend their diligence, but that in some respects they were mended, for they had put their press under better regulations, and were at that time printing Polybius. He was then asked whether there were better libraries at Oxford or Cambridge. He answered, he believed the Bodleian was larger than any they had at Cambridge; at the same time adding, "I hope, whether we have more books or not than they have at Cambridge, we shall make as good use of them as they do." Being asked whether All-Souls or Christ-Church library was the largest, he answered, "All-Souls library is the largest we have, except the Bodleian."

"Aye, (said the King,) that is the publick library."

His majesty enquired if he was then writing any thing. He answered, he was not, for he had pretty well told the world what he knew, and must now read to acquire more knowledge. The King, as it should seem with a view to urge him to rely on his own stores as an original writer, and to continue his labours, then said "I do not think you borrow much from any body." Johnson said, he thought he had already done his part as a writer. "I should have thought so too, (said the King,) if you had not written so well."—Johnson observed to me, upon this, that "No man could have paid a handsomer compliment; and it was fit for a King to pay. It was de-

cisive." When asked by another friend, at Sir Joshua Reynolds's, whether he made any reply to this high compliment, he answered, "No, Sir. When the King had said it, it was to be so. It was not for me to bandy civilities with my Sovereign." Perhaps no man who had spent his whole life in courts could have shewn a more nice and dignified sense of true politeness, than Johnson did in this instance.

His Majesty having observed to him that he supposed he must have read a great deal; Johnson answered, that he thought more than he read; that he had read a great deal in the early part of his life, but having fallen into ill health, he had not been able to read much, compared with others: for instance, he said he had not read much, compared with Dr. Warburton. Upon which the King said, that he heard Dr. Warburton was a man of such general knowledge, that you could scarce talk with him on any subject on which he was not qualified to speak; and that his learning resembled Garrick's acting, in its universality. His Majesty then talked of the controversy between Warburton and Lowth, which he seemed to have read, and asked Johnson what he thought of it. Johnson answered, "Warburton has most general, most scholastick learning; Lowth is the more correct scholar. I do not know which of them calls names best." The King was pleased to say he was of the same opinion; adding, "You do not think, then, Dr. Johnson, that there was much argument in the case." Johnson said, he did not think there was. "Why truly, (said the King,) when once it comes to calling names, argument is pretty well at an end." . . .

His Majesty expressed a desire to have the literary biography of this country ably executed, and proposed to Dr. Johnson to undertake it. Johnson signified his readiness to comply with his Majesty's wishes.

During the whole of this interview, Johnson talked to his Majesty with profound respect, but still in his firm manly manner, with a sonorous voice, and never in that subdued tone which is commonly used at the levee and in the drawing-room. After the King withdrew, Johnson shewed himself highly pleased with his Majesty's conversation, and gracious behaviour. He said to Mr. Barnard, "Sir they may talk of the King as they will; but he is the finest gentleman I have ever seen." And he afterwards observed to Mr. Langton, "Sir, his manners are those of as fine a gentleman as we may suppose Lewis the Fourteenth or Charles the Second."

At Sir Joshua Reynolds's, where a circle of Johnson's friends was collected round him to hear his account of this memorable conversation, Dr. Joseph Warton, in his frank and lively manner, was very active in pressing him to mention the particulars. "Come now, Sir, this is an interesting matter; do favour us with it." Johnson, with great good humour, complied.

He told them, "I found his Majesty wished I should talk, and I made it my business to talk. I find it does a man good to be talked to by his Sovereign. In the first place, a man cannot be in a passion—." Here some question interrupted him, which is to be regretted, as he certainly would have pointed out and illustrated many circumstances of advantage, from being in a situation, where the powers of the mind are at once excited to vigorous exertion, and tempered by reverential awe.

During all the time in which Dr. Johnson was employed in relating to the circle at Sir Joshua Reynolds's the particulars of what passed between the King and him, Dr. Goldsmith remained unmoved upon a sopha at some distance, affecting not to join in the least in the eager curiosity of the company. He assigned as a reason for his gloom and seeming inattention, that he apprehended Johnson had relinquished his purpose of furnishing him with a Prologue to his play, with the hopes of which he had been flattered; but it was strongly suspected that he was fretting with chagrin and envy at the singular honour Dr. Johnson had lately enjoyed. At length, the frankness and simplicity of his natural character prevailed. He sprung from the sopha, advanced to Johnson, and in a kind of flutter, from imagining himself in the situation which he had just been hearing described, exclaimed, "Well, you acquitted yourself in this conversation better than I should have done; for I should have bowed and stammered through the whole of it."

JOHNSON AND GOLDSMITH

He said, "Goldsmith should not be for ever attempting to shine in conversation: he has not temper for it, he is so much mortified when he fails. Sir, a game of jokes is composed partly of skill, partly of chance, a man may be beat at times by one who has not the tenth part of his wit. Now Goldsmith's putting himself against another, is

like a man laying a hundred to one who cannot spare the hundred. It is not worth a man's while. A man should not lay a hundred to one, unless he can easily spare it, though he has a hundred chances for him: he can get but a guinea, and he may lose a hundred. Goldsmith is in this state. When he contends, if he gets the better, it is a very little addition to a man of his literary reputation: if he does not get the better, he is miserably vexed."

Johnson's own superlative powers of wit set him above any risk of such uneasiness. Garrick had remarked to me of him, a few days before, "Rabelais and all other wits are nothing compared with him. You may be diverted by them; but Johnson gives you a forcible hug, and shakes laughter out of you, whether you will or no."

Goldsmith, however, was often very fortunate in his witty contests, even when he entered the lists with Johnson himself. Sir Joshua Reynolds was in company with them one day, when Goldsmith said, that he thought he could write a good fable, mentioned the simplicity which that kind of composition requires, and observed, that in most fables the animals introduced seldom talk in character. "For instance, (said he,) the fable of the little fishes, who saw birds fly over their heads, and envying them, petitioned Jupiter to be changed into birds. The skill (continued he,) consists in making them talk like little fishes." While he indulged himself in this fanciful reverie, he observed Johnson shaking his sides, and laughing. Upon which he smartly proceeded, "Why, Dr. Johnson, this is not so easy as you seem to think; for if you were to make little fishes talk, they would talk like WHALES."

I dined with him this day at the house of my friends, Messieurs Edward and Charles Dilly, booksellers in the Poultry: there were present, their elder brother Mr. Dilly of Bedfordshire, Dr. Goldsmith, Mr. Langton, Mr. Claxton, Reverend Dr. Mayo a dissenting minister, the Reverend Mr. Toplady, and my friend the Reverend Mr. Temple.

I introduced the subject of toleration. JOHNSON. "Every society has a right to preserve publick peace and order, and therefore has a good right to prohibit the propagation of opinions which have a dangerous tendency. To say the *magistrate* has this right, is using an inadequate word: it is the *society* for which the magistrate is agent. He may be morally or theologically wrong in restraining the

propagation of opinions which he thinks dangerous, but he is politically right." MAYO. "I am of opinion, Sir, that every man is entitled to liberty of conscience in religion; and that the magistrate cannot restrain that right." JOHNSON. "Sir, I agree with you. Every man has a right to liberty of conscience, and with that the magistrate cannot interfere. People confound liberty of thinking with liberty of talking; nay, with liberty of preaching. Every man has a physical right to think as he pleases; for it cannot be discovered how he thinks. He has not a moral right, for he ought to inform himself, and think justly. But, Sir, no member of a society has a right to *teach* any doctrine contrary to what the society holds to be true. The magistrate, I say, may be wrong in what he thinks: but while he thinks himself right, he may and ought to enforce what he thinks." MAYO. "Then, Sir, we are to remain always in errour, and truth never can prevail; and the magistrate was right in persecuting the first Christians." JOHNSON. "Sir, the only method by which religious truth can be established is by martyrdom. The magistrate has a right to enforce what he thinks; and he who is conscious of the truth has a right to suffer. I am afraid there is no other way of ascertaining the truth, but by persecution on the one hand and enduring it on the other." . . .

During this argument, Goldsmith sat in restless agitation, from a wish to get in and *shine*. Finding himself excluded, he had taken his hat to go away, but remained for some time with it in his hand, like a gamester, who at the close of a long night, lingers for a little while, to see if he can have a favourable opening to finish with success. Once when he was beginning to speak, he found himself overpowered by the loud voice of Johnson, who was at the opposite end of the table, and did not perceive Goldsmith's attempt. Thus disappointed of his wish to obtain the attention of the company, Goldsmith in a passion threw down his hat, looking angrily at Johnson, and exclaiming in a bitter tone, *"Take it."* When Toplady was going to speak, Johnson uttered some sound, which led Goldsmith to think that he was beginning again, and taking the words from Toplady. Upon which, he seized this opportunity of venting his own envy and spleen, under the pretext of supporting another person: "Sir, (said he to Johnson,) the gentleman has heard you patiently for an hour; pray allow us now to hear him." JOHNSON. (sternly,) "Sir, I was not interrupting the gentleman. I was only giving him a signal of my at-

tention. Sir, you are impertinent." Goldsmith made no reply, but continued in the company for some time.

A gentleman present ventured to ask Dr. Johnson if there was not a material difference as to toleration of opinions which lead to action, and opinions merely speculative; for instance, would it be wrong in the magistrate to tolerate those who preach against the doctrine of the TRINITY? Johnson was highly offended, and said, "I wonder, Sir, how a gentleman of your piety can introduce this subject in a mixed company." He told me afterwards, that the impropriety was, that perhaps some of the company might have talked on the subject in such terms as might have shocked him; or he might have been forced to appear in their eyes a narrow-minded man. The gentleman, with submissive deference, said, he had only hinted at the question from a desire to hear Dr. Johnson's opinion upon it. JOHNSON. "Why then, Sir, I think that permitting men to preach any opinion contrary to the doctrine of the established church tends, in a certain degree, to lessen the authority of the church, and consequently, to lessen the influence of religion." "It may be considered, (said the gentleman,) whether it would not be politick to tolerate in such a case." JOHNSON. "Sir, we have been talking of *right:* this is another question. I think it is *not* politick to tolerate in such a case." . . .

He and Mr. Langton and I went together to the CLUB, where we found Mr. Burke, Mr. Garrick, and some other members, and amongst them our friend Goldsmith, who sat silently brooding over Johnson's reprimand to him after dinner. Johnson perceived this, and said aside to some of us, "I'll make Goldsmith forgive me"; and then called to him in a loud voice, "Dr. Goldsmith,—something passed to-day where you and I dined; I ask your pardon." Goldsmith answered placidly, "It must be much from you, Sir, that I take ill." And so at once the difference was over, and they were on as easy terms as ever, and Goldsmith rattled away as usual.

In our way to the club to-night, when I regretted that Goldsmith would, upon every occasion, endeavour to shine, by which he often exposed himself, Mr. Langton observed, that he was not like Addison, who was content with the fame of his writings, and did not aim also at excellency in conversation, for which he found himself unfit; and that he said to a lady who complained of his having talked little in company, "Madam, I have but ninepence in ready

money, but I can draw for a thousand pounds.' I observed, that Goldsmith had a great deal of gold in his cabinet, but, not content with that, was always taking out his purse. JOHNSON. "Yes, Sir, and that so often an empty purse!"

Goldsmith's incessant desire of being conspicuous in company, was the occasion of his sometimes appearing to such disadvantage as one should hardly have supposed possible in a man of his genius. When his literary reputation had risen deservedly high, and his society was much courted, he became very jealous of the extraordinary attention which was every where paid to Johnson. One evening, in a circle of wits, he found fault with me for talking of Johnson as entitled to the honour of unquestionable superiority. "Sir, (said he,) you are for making a monarchy of what should be a republick."

He was still more mortified, when talking in a company with fluent vivacity, and, as he flattered himself, to the admiration of all who were present; a German who sat next him, and perceived Johnson rolling himself, as if about to speak, suddenly stopped him, saying, "Stay, stay,—Toctor Shonson is going to say something." This was, no doubt, very provoking, especially to one so irritable as Goldsmith, who frequently mentioned it with strong expressions of indignation.

JOHNSON'S BIG STICK

"MR. BOSWELL TO DR. JOHNSON.[3]

"Edinburgh, Feb. 2, 1775.

". . . As to Macpherson, I am anxious to have from yourself a full and pointed account of what has passed between you and him. It is confidently told here, that before your book came out he sent to you, to let you know that he understood you meant to deny the authenticity of Ossian's poems; that the originals were in his pos-

[3] This letter refers to the famous "Ossian controversy" in which Dr. Johnson was involved. James Macpherson, a Scotch schoolmaster, had published the *Poems of Ossian* which he claimed to have translated from old manuscripts discovered by him in the Highlands. Dr. Johnson demanded the originals, and when they were not forthcoming he denounced Macpherson as an impostor. Macpherson had probably seen some Gaelic fragments of the Celtic bard Ossian, but the poems were his own. Their wild romantic beauty made them popular except with Johnson and other severe classicists. That the deception was practised by a Scot was doubly offensive to him.

session; that you might have inspection of them, and might take the evidence of people skilled in the Erse language; and that he hoped, after this fair offer, you would not be so uncandid as to assert that he had refused reasonable proof. That you paid no regard to his message, but published your strong attack upon him; and then he wrote a letter to you, in such terms as he thought suited to one who had not acted as a man of veracity." . . .

What words were used by Mr. Macpherson in his letter to the venerable Sage, I have never heard; but they are generally said to have been of a nature very different from the language of literary contest. Dr. Johnson's answer appeared in the news-papers of the day, and has since been frequently re-published; but not with perfect accuracy. I give it as dictated to me by himself, written down in his presence, and authenticated by a note in his own handwriting, *"This, I think, is a true copy."*

"Mr. James Macpherson,—I received your foolish and impudent letter. Any violence offered me I shall do my best to repel; and what I cannot do for myself, the law shall do for me. I hope I shall never be deterred from detecting what I think a cheat, by the menaces of a ruffian.

"What would you have me retract? I thought your book an imposture; I think it an imposture still. For this opinion I have given my reasons to the publick, which I here dare you to refute. Your rage I defy. Your abilities, since your Homer, are not so formidable; and what I hear of your morals, inclines me to pay regard not to what you shall say, but to what you shall prove. You may print this if you will."

"Sam. Johnson."

Mr. Macpherson little knew the character of Dr. Johnson, if he supposed that he could be easily intimidated; for no man was ever more remarkable for personal courage. He had, indeed, an aweful dread of death, or rather, "of something after death"; and what rational man, who seriously thinks of quitting all that he has ever known, and going into a new and unknown state of being, can be without that dread? But his fear was from reflection; his courage natural. His fear, in that one instance, was the result of philosophical and religious consideration. He feared death, but he feared nothing else, not even what might occasion death. Many instances of his

resolution may be mentioned. One day, at Mr. Beauclerk's house in the country, when two large dogs were fighting, he went up to them, and beat them till they separated; and at another time, when told of the danger there was that a gun might burst if charged with many balls, he put in six or seven, and fired it off against a wall. Mr. Langton told me, that when they were swimming together near Oxford, he cautioned Dr. Johnson against a pool, which was reckoned particularly dangerous; upon which Johnson directly swam into it. He told me himself that one night he was attacked in the street by four men, to whom he would not yield, but kept them all at bay, till the watch came up, and carried both him and them to the round-house. In the playhouse at Lichfield, as Mr. Garrick informed me, Johnson having for a moment quitted a chair which was placed for him between the side-scenes, a gentleman took possession of it, and when Johnson on his return civilly demanded his seat, rudely refused to give it up; upon which Johnson laid hold of it, and tossed him and the chair into the pit. Foote, who so successfully revived the old comedy, by exhibiting living characters, had resolved to imitate Johnson on the stage, expecting great profits from his ridicule of so celebrated a man. Johnson being informed of his intention, and being at dinner at Mr. Thomas Davies's the bookseller, from whom I had the story, he asked Mr. Davies "what was the common price of an oak stick"; and being answered sixpence, "Why then, Sir, (said he,) give me leave to send your servant to purchase me a shilling one. I'll have a double quantity; for I am told Foote means to *take me off,* as he calls it, and I am determined the fellow shall not do it with impunity." Davies took care to acquaint Foote of this, which effectually checked the wantonness of the mimick. Mr. Macpherson's menaces made Johnson provide himself with the same implement of defence; and had he been attacked, I have no doubt that, old as he was, he would have made his corporal prowess be felt as much as his intellectual.

THE MEETING OF JOHNSON AND WILKES[4]

I am now to record a very curious incident in Dr. Johnson's Life, which fell under my own observation; of which *pars magna fui,*

[4] John Wilkes (1727–1797), a politician, agitator, and publicist, who was twice expelled from Parliament, re-elected, and finally made Mayor of London. His essays and pamphlets had given considerable offense to the Tories.

and which I am persuaded will, with the liberal-minded, be much to his credit.

My desire of being acquainted with celebrated men of every description, had made me, much about the same time, obtain an introduction to Dr. Samuel Johnson and to John Wilkes, Esq. Two men more different could perhaps not be selected out of all mankind. They had even attacked one another with some asperity in their writings; yet I lived in habits of friendship with both. I could fully relish the excellence of each; for I have ever delighted in that intellectual chymistry, which can separate good qualities from evil in the same person.

Sir John Pringle, "mine own friend and my Father's friend," between whom and Dr. Johnson I in vain wished to establish an acquaintance, as I respected and lived in intimacy with both of them, observed to me once, very ingeniously, "It is not in friendship as in mathematicks, where two things, each equal to a third, are equal between themselves. You agree with Johnson as a middle quality, and you agree with me as a middle quality; but Johnson and I should not agree." Sir John was not sufficiently flexible; so I desisted; knowing, indeed, that the repulsion was equally strong on the part of Johnson; who, I know not from what cause, unless his being a Scotchman, had formed a very erroneous opinion of Sir John. But I conceived an irresistible wish, if possible, to bring Dr. Johnson and Mr. Wilkes together. How to manage it, was a nice and difficult matter.

My worthy booksellers and friends, Messieurs Dilly in the Poultry, at whose hospitable and well-covered table I have seen a greater number of literary men, than at any other, except that of Sir Joshua Reynolds, had invited me to meet Mr. Wilkes and some more gentlemen on Wednesday, May 15. "Pray (said I,) let us have Dr. Johnson."—"What with Mr. Wilkes? not for the world, (said Mr. Edward Dilly:) Dr. Johnson would never forgive me."—"Come, (said I,) if you let me negociate for you, I will be answerable that all shall go well." DILLY. "Nay, if you will take it upon you, I am sure I shall be very happy to see them both here."

Notwithstanding the high veneration which I entertained for Dr. Johnson, I was sensible that he was sometimes a little actuated by the spirit of contradiction, and by means of that I hoped I should gain my point. I was persuaded that if I had come upon him with a

direct proposal, "Sir, will you dine in company with Jack Wilkes?" he would have flown into a passion, and would probably have answered, "Dine with Jack Wilkes, Sir! I'd as soon dine with Jack Ketch." I therefore, while we were sitting quietly by ourselves at his house in an evening, took occasion to open my plan thus:—"Mr. Dilly, Sir, sends his respectful compliments to you, and would be happy if you would do him the honour to dine with him on Wednesday next along with me, as I must soon go to Scotland." JOHNSON. "Sir, I am obliged to Mr. Dilly. I will wait upon him—" BOSWELL. "Provided, Sir, I suppose, that the company which he is to have, is agreeable to you." JOHNSON. "What do you mean, Sir? What do you take me for? Do you think I am so ignorant of the world as to imagine that I am to prescribe to a gentleman what company he is to have at his table?" BOSWELL. "I beg your pardon, Sir, for wishing to prevent you from meeting people whom you might not like. Perhaps he may have some of what he calls his patriotick friends with him." JOHNSON. "Well, Sir, and what then? What care *I* for his *patriotick friends?* Poh!" BOSWELL. "I should not be surprized to find Jack Wilkes there." JOHNSON. "And if Jack Wilkes *should* be there, what is that to *me,* Sir? My dear friend, let us have no more of this. I am sorry to be angry with you; but really it is treating me strangely to talk to me as if I could not meet any company whatever, occasionally." BOSWELL. "Pray forgive me, Sir: I meant well. But you shall meet whoever comes, for me." Thus I secured him, and told Dilly that he would find him very well pleased to be one of his guests on the day appointed.

Upon the much-expected Wednesday, I called on him about half an hour before dinner, as I often did when we were to dine out together, to see that he was ready in time, and to accompany him. I found him buffeting his books, as upon a former occasion, covered with dust, and making no preparation for going abroad. "How is this, Sir? (said I.) Don't you recollect that you are to dine at Mr. Dilly's?" JOHNSON. "Sir, I did not think of going to Dilly's: It went out of my head. I have ordered dinner at home with Mrs. Williams." [5] BOSWELL. "But, my dear Sir, you know you were engaged to Mr. Dilly, and I told him so. He will expect you, and will be much disappointed if you don't come." JOHNSON. "You must talk to Mrs. Williams about this."

[5] One of Johnson's dependants and for some years a member of his household.

Here was a sad dilemma. I feared that what I was so confident I had secured would yet be frustrated. He had accustomed himself to shew Mrs. Williams such a degree of humane attention, as frequently imposed some restraint upon him; and I knew that if she should be obstinate, he would not stir. I hastened down stairs to the blind lady's room, and told her I was in great uneasiness, for Dr. Johnson had engaged to me to dine this day at Mr. Dilly's, but that he had told me he had forgotten his engagement, and had ordered dinner at home. "Yes, Sir, (said she, pretty peevishly,) Dr. Johnson is to dine at home."—"Madam, (said I,) his respect for you is such, that I know he will not leave you unless you absolutely desire it. But as you have so much of his company, I hope you will be good enough to forego it for a day; as Mr. Dilly is a very worthy man, has frequently had agreeable parties at his house for Dr. Johnson, and will be vexed if the Doctor neglects him to-day. And then, Madam, be pleased to consider my situation; I carried the message, and I assured Mr. Dilly that Dr. Johnson was to come, and no doubt he has made a dinner, and invited a company, and boasted of the honour he expected to have. I shall be quite disgraced if the Doctor is not there." She gradually softened to my solicitations, which were certainly as earnest as most entreaties to ladies upon any occasion, and was graciously pleased to empower me to tell Dr. Johnson, "That all things considered, she thought he should certainly go." I flew back to him, still in dust, and careless of what should be the event, "indifferent in his choice to go or stay;" but as soon as I had announced to him Mrs. Williams' consent, he roared, "Frank, a clean shirt," and was very soon drest. When I had him fairly seated in a hackney-coach with me, I exulted as much as a fortune-hunter who has got an heiress into a post-chaise with him to set out for Gretna-Green.

When we entered Mr. Dilly's drawing room, he found himself in the midst of a company he did not know. I kept myself snug and silent, watching how he would conduct himself. I observed him whispering to Mr. Dilly, "Who is that gentleman, Sir?"—"Mr. Arthur Lee."—JOHNSON. "Too, too, too," (under his breath,) which was one of his habitual mutterings. Mr. Arthur Lee could not but be very obnoxious to Johnson, for he was not only a *patriot* but an *American*. He was afterwards minister from the United States at the court of Madrid. "And who is the gentleman in lace?"—"Mr.

Wilkes, Sir." This information confounded him still more; he had some difficulty to restrain himself, and taking up a book, sat down upon a window-seat and read, or at least kept his eye upon it intently for some time, till he composed himself. His feelings, I dare say, were aukward enough. But he no doubt recollected his having rated me for supposing that he could be at all disconcerted by any company, and he, therefore, resolutely set himself to behave quite as an easy man of the world, who could adapt himself at once to the disposition and manners of those whom he might chance to meet.

The cheering sound of "Dinner is upon the table," dissolved his reverie, and we *all* sat down without any symptom of ill humour. There were present, beside Mr. Wilkes, and Mr. Arthur Lee, who was an old companion of mine when he studied physick at Edinburgh, Mr. (now Sir John) Miller, Dr. Lettsom, and Mr. Slater the druggist. Mr. Wilkes placed himself next to Dr. Johnson, and be haved to him with so much attention and politeness, that he gained upon him insensibly. No man eat more heartily than Johnson, or loved better what was nice and delicate. Mr. Wilkes was very assiduous in helping him to some fine veal. "Pray give me leave, Sir:— It is better here— A little of the brown— Some fat, Sir— A little of the stuffing— Some gravy— Let me have the pleasure of giving you some butter— Allow me to recommend a squeeze of this orange;—or the lemon, perhaps, may have more zest."—"Sir, Sir, I am obliged to you, Sir," cried Johnson, bowing, and turning his head to him with a look for some time of "surly virtue," but, in a short while, of complacency.

Foote being mentioned, Johnson said, "He is not a good mimick." One of the company added, "A merry Andrew, a buffoon." JOHNSON. "But he has wit too, and is not deficient in ideas, or in fertility and variety of imagery, and not empty of reading; he has knowledge enough to fill up his part. One species of wit he has in an eminent degree, that of escape. You drive him into a corner with both hands; but he's gone, Sir, when you think you have got him—like an animal that jumps over your head. Then he has a great range for wit; he never lets truth stand between him and a jest, and he is sometimes mighty coarse. Garrick is under many restraints from which Foote is free." WILKES. "Garrick's wit is more like Lord Chesterfield's." JOHNSON. "The first time I was in company with Foote was at Fitzherbert's. Having no good opinion of the fellow, I was re-

solved not to be pleased; and it is very difficult to please a man against his will. I went on eating my dinner pretty sullenly, affecting not to mind him. But the dog was so very comical, that I was obliged to lay down my knife and fork, throw myself back upon my chair, and fairly laugh it out. No, Sir, he was irresistible. He upon one occasion experienced in an extraordinary degree, the efficacy of his powers of entertaining. Amongst the many and various modes which he tried of getting money, he became a partner with a small-beer brewer, and he was to have a share of the profits for procuring customers amongst his numerous acquaintance. Fitzherbert was one who took his small-beer; but it was so bad that the servants resolved not to drink it. They were at some loss how to notify their resolution, being afraid of offending their master, who they knew liked Foote much as a companion. At last they fixed upon a little black boy, who was rather a favourite, to be their deputy, and deliver their remonstrance; and having invested him with the whole authority of the kitchen, he was to inform Mr. Fitzherbert, in all their names, upon a certain day, that they would drink Foote's small-beer no longer. On that day Foote happened to dine at Fitzherbert's, and this boy served at table; he was so delighted with Foote's stories, and merriment, and grimace, that when he went down stairs, he told them, 'This is the finest man I have ever seen. I will not deliver your message. I will drink his small-beer.' "

Somebody observed that Garrick could not have done this. Wilkes. "Garrick would have made the small-beer still smaller. He is now leaving the stage; but he will play *Scrub* all his life." I knew that Johnson would let nobody attack Garrick but himself, as Garrick once said to me, and I had heard him praise his liberality; so to bring out his commendation of his celebrated pupil, I said, loudly, "I have heard Garrick is liberal." Johnson. "Yes, Sir, I know that Garrick has given away more money than any man in England that I am acquainted with, and that not from ostentatious views. Garrick was very poor when he began life; so when he came to have money, he probably was very unskilful in giving away, and saved when he should not. But Garrick began to be liberal as soon as he could; and I am of opinion, the reputation of avarice which he has had, has been very lucky for him, and prevented his having many enemies. You despise a man for avarice, but do not hate him. Garrick might have been much better attacked for living with more

splendour than is suitable to a player: if they had had the wit to have assaulted him in that quarter, they might have galled him more. But they have kept clamouring about his avarice, which has rescued him from much obloquy and envy."

Talking of the great difficulty of obtaining authentick information for biography, Johnson told us, "When I was a young fellow I wanted to write the *Life of Dryden,* and in order to get materials, I applied to the only two persons then alive who had seen him; these were old Swinney, and old Cibber. Swinney's information was no more than this, "That at Will's coffee-house Dryden had a particular chair for himself, which was set by the fire in winter, and was then called his winter-chair; and that it was carried out for him to the balcony in summer, and was then called his summer-chair." Cibber could tell no more but "That he remembered him a decent old man, arbiter of critical disputes at Will's." You are to consider that Cibber was then at a great distance from Dryden, had perhaps one leg only in the room, and durst not draw in the other." BOSWELL. "Yet Cibber was a man of observation?" JOHNSON. "I think not." BOSWELL. "You will allow his *Apology* to be well done." JOHNSON. "Very well done, to be sure, Sir. That book is a striking proof of the justice of Pope's remark:

> 'Each might his several province well command,
> Would all but stoop to what they understand.' "

BOSWELL. "And his plays are good." JOHNSON. "Yes; but that was his trade; *l'esprit du corps:* he had been all his life among players and play-writers. I wondered that he had so little to say in conversation, for he had kept the best company, and learnt all that can be got by the ear. He abused Pindar to me, and then shewed me an Ode of his own, with an absurd couplet, making a linnet soar on an eagle's wing. I told him that when the ancients made a simile, they always made it like something real."

Mr. Wilkes remarked, that "among all the bold flights of Shakspeare's imagination, the boldest was making Birnamwood march to Dunsinane; creating a wood where there never was a shrub; a wood in Scotland! ha! ha! ha!" And he also observed, that "the clannish slavery of the Highlands of Scotland was the single exception to Milton's remark of "The Mountain Nymph, sweet Liberty," being worshipped in all hilly countries."—"When I was at In-

verary (said he,) on a visit to my old friend, Archibald, Duke of Argyle, his dependents congratulated me on being such a favourite of his Grace. I said, "It is then, gentlemen, truely lucky for me; for if I had displeased the Duke, and he had wished it, there is not a Campbell among you but would have been ready to bring John Wilkes's head to him in a charger. It would have been only

'Off with his head! So much for Aylesbury.'

I was then member for Aylesbury." . .

Mr. Arthur Lee mentioned some Scotch who had taken possession of a barren part of America, and wondered why they should choose it. JOHNSON. "Why, Sir, all barrenness is comparative. The *Scotch* would not know it to be barren." BOSWELL. "Come, come, he is flattering the English. You have now been in Scotland, Sir, and say if you did not see meat and drink enough there." JOHNSON. "Why yes, Sir; meat and drink enough to give the enhabitants sufficient strength to run away from home." All these quick and lively sallies were said sportively, quite in jest, and with a smile, which showed that he meant only wit. Upon this topick he and Mr. Wilkes could perfectly assimilate; here was a bond of union between them, and I was conscious that as both of them had visited Caledonia, both were fully satisfied of the strange narrow ignorance of those who imagine that it is a land of famine. But they amused themselves with persevering in the old jokes. When I claimed a superiority for Scotland over England in one respect, that no man can be arrested there for a debt merely because another swears it against him; but there must first be the judgement of a court of law ascertaining its justice; and that a seizure of the person, before judgement is obtained, can take place only, if his creditor should swear that he is about to fly from the country, or, as it is technically expressed, is *in meditatione fugæ:* WILKES. "That, I should think, may be safely sworn of all the Scotch nation." JOHNSON. (to Mr. Wilkes,) "You must know, Sir, I lately took my friend Boswell and shewed him genuine civilised life in an English provincial town. I turned him loose at Lichfield, my native city, that he might see for once real civility: for you know he lives among savages in Scotland, and among rakes in London." WILKES. "Except when he is with grave, sober, decent people like you and me." JOHNSON. (smiling,) "And we ashamed of him."

They were quite frank and easy. Johnson told the story of his ask-

ing Mrs. Macaulay to allow her footman to sit down with them, to prove the ridiculousness of the argument for the equality of mankind; and he said to me afterwards, with a nod of satisfaction, "You saw Mr. Wilkes acquiesced." Wilkes talked with all imaginable freedom of the ludicrous title given to the Attorney-General, *Diabolus Regis:* adding, "I have reason to know something about that officer; for I was prosecuted for a libel." Johnson, who many people would have supposed must have been furiously angry at hearing this talked of so lightly, said not a word. He was now, *indeed,* "a good-humoured fellow."

After dinner we had an accession of Mrs. Knowles, the Quaker lady, well known for her various talents, and of Mr. Alderman Lee. Amidst some patriotick groans, somebody (I think the Alderman) said, "Poor old England is lost." JOHNSON. "Sir, it is not so much to be lamented that Old England is lost, as that the Scotch have found it." WILKES. "Had Lord Bute governed Scotland only, I should not have taken the trouble to write his eulogy, and dedicate *Mortimer* to him."

Mr. Wilkes held a candle to shew a fine print of a beautiful female figure which hung in the room, and pointed out the elegant contour of the bosom with the finger of an arch connoisseur. He afterwards, in a conversation with me, waggishly insisted, that all the time Johnson shewed visible signs of a fervent admiration of the corresponding charms of the fair Quaker.

This record, though by no means so perfect as I could wish, will serve to give a notion of a very curious interview, which was not only pleasing at the time, but had the agreeable and benignant effect of reconciling any animosity, and sweetening any acidity, which in the various bustle of political contest, had been produced in the minds of two men, who though widely different, had so many things in common—classical learning, modern literature, wit, and humour, and ready repartee—that it would have been much to be regretted if they had been for ever at a distance from each other.

Mr. Burke gave me much credit for this successful *negociation;* and pleasantly said, that "there was nothing to equal it in the whole history of the *Corps Diplomatique.*"

I attended Dr. Johnson home, and had the satisfaction to hear him tell Mrs. Williams how much he had been pleased with Mr. Wilkes's company, and what an agreeable day he had passed.

Franklin's Autobiography

That apostle of thrift and dispenser of worldly wisdom, Benjamin Franklin (1706–1790), was almost equally famous in the Old World and the New. At seventeen he left his native Boston to hunt a job in Philadelphia. Here he became so famous in the printing business that he was able to retire at forty-three and devote himself more fully to public affairs in the state and nation. As member of the Colonial Assembly, Postmaster-general, and later as representative of the government in England and France, he was busy, popular, and renowned. He won the affection of the French people during his long diplomatic mission in Paris. His interest in his home city of Philadelphia was shown by his practical inventions and his educational benefactions, while his scientific achievements gave him wide recognition among scholars in Europe and America. Because of his versatility of accomplishment he has been called the "many-sided Franklin." During his long life he had known some of the most eminent statesmen and scholars in two continents, had witnessed many revolutionary scenes, and had signed four historical documents—the Declaration of Independence, the treaty of friendship with France, the treaty of peace with England, and the Constitution of the United States. His writings, chiefly philosophical and political, fill many volumes, but in the history of literature he is remembered by two small books—*Poor Richard's Almanac* and his *Autobiography*. The first of these, with its proverb-packed preface called "The Way to Wealth," abounds in useful information and practical philosophy. The *Autobiography* was first published in English (an incomplete French translation had previously appeared) in 1817 by Franklin's grandson, who made many changes from the original manuscript. Not until 1868 was the complete manuscript put into print. It was done by John Bigelow, the editor of Franklin's works and his biographer. The previous edition had ended with the year 1757; the later edition includes additional pages bringing the life down to 1762. This interesting story of a successful life, or a half-century of it, is told

with simplicity and sincerity. Certain passages have attained renown because of the vital quality of their matter and manner. How a self-made man emerged from the mass into world-wide distinction by diligence, thrift, and high intelligence, is the "lesson" of Franklin's *Autobiography* for generations of American youth. Though addressed to his son and professedly written for the instruction of his descendants, as well as to gratify personal vanity, the *Autobiography* has proved an appealing human record to the author's countrymen in general and to many readers in foreign lands.

[The standard edition of Franklin's *Autobiography* is John Bigelow's, first published in 1868.]

SELF-EDUCATION

From a child I was fond of reading, and all the little money that came into my hands was ever laid out in books. Pleased with the *Pilgrim's Progress,* my first collection was of John Bunyan's works in separate little volumes. I afterward sold them to enable me to buy R. Burton's *Historical Collections;* they were small chapmen's books, and cheap, 40 or 50 in all. My father's little library consisted chiefly of books in polemic divinity, most of which I read, and have since often regretted that, at a time when I had such a thirst for knowledge, more proper books had not fallen into my way, since it was now resolved I should not be a clergyman. Plutarch's *Lives* there was in which I read abundantly, and I still think that time spent to great advantage. There was also a book of De Foe's, called *An Essay on Projects,* and another of Dr. Mather's, called *Essays to do Good,* which perhaps gave me a turn of thinking that had an influence on some of the principal future events of my life.

This bookish inclination at length determined my father to make me a printer, though he had already one son (James) of that profession. In 1717 my brother James returned from England with a press and letters to set up his business in Boston. I liked it much better than that of my father, but still had a hankering for the sea. To prevent the apprehended effect of such an inclination, my father was impatient to have me bound to my brother. I stood out some time, but at last was persuaded, and signed the indentures when I was yet but twelve years old. I was to serve as an apprentice till I was twenty-one years of age, only I was to be allowed journeyman's wages during the last year. In the little time I made great proficiency in the business, and became a useful hand to my brother. I now had access to better books. An acquaintance with the apprentices of booksellers enabled me sometimes to borrow a small one, which I was careful to return soon and clean. Often I sat up in my room reading the greatest part of the night, when the book was borrowed in the evening and to be returned early in the morning, lest it should be missed or wanted.

And after some time an ingenious tradesman, Mr. Matthew Adams,

who had a pretty collection of books, and who frequented our printing-house, took notice of me, invited me to his library, and very kindly lent me such books as I chose to read. I now took a fancy to poetry, and made some little pieces; my brother, thinking it might turn to account, encouraged me, and put me on composing occasional ballads. One was called *The Lighthouse Tragedy,* and contained an account of the drowning of Captain Worthilake, with his two daughters: the other was a sailor's song, on the taking of *Teach* (or Blackbeard) the pirate. They were wretched stuff, in the Grub-street-ballad style; and when they were printed he sent me about the town to sell them. The first sold wonderfully, the event being recent, having made a great noise. This flattered my vanity; but my father discouraged me by ridiculing my performances, and telling me verse-makers were generally beggars. So I escaped being a poet, most probably a very bad one; but as prose writing has been of great use to me in the course of my life, and was a principal means of my advancement, I shall tell you how, in such a situation, I acquired what little ability I have in that way.

There was another bookish lad in the town, John Collins by name, with whom I was intimately acquainted. We sometimes disputed, and very fond we were of argument, and very desirous of confuting one another, which disputatious turn, by the way, is apt to become a very bad habit, making people often extremely disagreeable in company by the contradiction that is necessary to bring it into practice; and thence, besides souring and spoiling the conversation, is productive of disgusts and, perhaps, enmities where you may have occasion for friendship. I had caught it by reading my father's books of dispute about religion. Persons of good sense, I have since observed, seldom fall into it, except lawyers, university men, and men of all sorts that have been bred at Edinborough.

A question was once, somehow or other, started between Collins and me, of the propriety of educating the female sex in learning, and their abilities for study. He was of opinion that it was improper, and that they were naturally unequal to it. I took the contrary side, perhaps a little for dispute's sake. He was naturally more eloquent, had a ready plenty of words; and sometimes, as I thought, bore me down more by his fluency than by the strength of his reasons. As we parted without settling the point, and were not to see one another again for some time, I sat down to put my arguments in writing, which I

copied fair and sent to him. He answered, and I replied. Three or four letters of a side had passed, when my father happened to find my papers and read them. Without entering into the discussion, he took occasion to talk to me about the manner of my writing; observed that, though I had the advantage of my antagonist in correct spelling and pointing (which I ow'd to the printing-house), I fell far short in elegance of expression, in method and in perspicuity, of which he convinced me by several instances. I saw the justice of his remarks, and thence grew more attentive to the manner in writing, and determined to endeavor at improvement.

About this time I met with an odd volume of the *Spectator*. It was the third. I had never before seen any of them. I bought it, read it over and over, and was much delighted with it. I thought the writing excellent, and wished, if possible, to imitate it. With this view I took some of the papers, and, making short hints of the sentiment in each sentence, laid them by for a few days, and then, without looking at the book, try'd to compleat the papers again, by expressing each hinted sentiment at length, and as fully as it had been expressed before, in any suitable words that should come to hand. Then I compared my *Spectator* with the original, discovered some of my faults, and corrected them. But I found I wanted a stock of words, or a readiness in recollecting and using them, which I thought I should have acquired before that time if I had gone on making verses; since the continual occasion for words of the same import, but of different length, to suit the measure, or of different sound for the rhyme, would have laid me under a constant necessity of searching for variety, and also have tended to fix that variety in my mind, and make me master of it. Therefore I took some of the tales and turned them into verse; and, after a time, when I had pretty well forgotten the prose, turned them back again. I also sometimes jumbled my collections of hints into confusion, and after some weeks endeavored to reduce them into the best order, before I began to form the full sentences and compleat the paper. This was to teach me method in the arrangement of thoughts. By comparing my work afterwards with the original, I discovered many faults and amended them; but I sometimes had the pleasure of fancying that, in certain particulars of small import, I had been lucky enough to improve the method or the language, and this encouraged me to think I might possibly in time come to be a

tolerable English writer, of which I was extremely ambitious. My time for these exercises and for reading was at night, after work or before it began in the morning, or on Sundays, when I contrived to be in the printing-house alone, evading as much as I could the common attendance on public worship which my father used to exact on me when I was under his care, and which indeed I still thought a duty, though I could not, as it seemed to me, afford time to practise it.

When about sixteen years of age I happened to meet with a book, written by one Tryon, recommending a vegetable diet. I determined to go into it. My brother, being yet unmarried, did not keep house, but boarded himself and his apprentices in another family. My refusing to eat flesh occasioned an inconveniency, and I was frequently chid for my singularity. I made myself acquainted with Tryon's manner of preparing some of his dishes, such as boiling potatoes or rice, making hasty pudding, and a few others, and then proposed to my brother, that if he would give me, weekly, half the money he paid for my board, I would board myself. He instantly agreed to it, and I presently found that I could save half what he paid me. This was an additional fund for buying books. But I had another advantage in it. My brother and the rest going from the printing-house to their meals, I remained there alone, and, despatching presently my light repast, which often was no more than a bisket or a slice of bread, a handful of raisins or a tart from the pastry-cook's, and a glass of water, had the rest of the time till their return for study, in which I made the greater progress, from that greater clearness of head and quicker apprehension which usually attend temperance in eating and drinking.

And now it was that, being on some occasion made asham'd of my ignorance in figures, which I had twice failed in learning when at school, I took Cocker's book of Arithmetick, and went through the whole by myself with great ease. I also read Seller's and Shermy's books of Navigation, and became acquainted with the little geometry they contain; but never proceeded far in that science. And I read about this time Locke *On Human Understanding,* and the *Art of Thinking,* by Messrs du Port Royal.

While I was intent on improving my language, I met with an English grammar (I think it was Greenwood's), at the end of which there were two little sketches of the arts of rhetoric and logic, the latter

finishing with a specimen of a dispute in the Socratic method; and soon after I procur'd Xenophon's *Memorable Things of Socrates,* wherein there are many instances of the same method. I was charm'd with it, adopted it, dropt my abrupt contradiction and positive argumentation, and put on the humble inquirer and doubter. And being then, from reading Shaftesbury and Collins, become a real doubter in many points of our religious doctrine, I found this method safest for myself and very embarrassing to those against whom I used it; therefore I took a delight in it, practis'd it continually, and grew very artful and expert in drawing people, even of superior knowledge, into concessions, the consequences of which they did not foresee, entangling them in difficulties out of which they could not extricate themselves, and so obtaining victories that neither myself nor my cause always deserved. I continu'd this method some few years, but gradually left it, retaining only the habit of expressing myself in terms of modest diffidence; never using, when I advanced anything that may possibly be disputed, the words *certainly, undoubtedly,* or any others that give the air of positiveness to an opinion; but rather say, I conceive or apprehend a thing to be so and so; it appears to me, or *I should think it so or so,* for such and such reasons; or *I imagine it to be so;* or *it is so, if I am not mistaken.* This habit, I believe, has been of great advantage to me when I have had occasion to inculcate my opinions, and persuade men into measures that I have been from time to time engag'd in promoting; and, as the chief ends of conversation are to *inform* or to be *informed,* to *please* or to *persuade,* I wish well-meaning, sensible men would not lessen their power of doing good by a positive, assuming manner, that seldom fails to disgust, tends to create opposition, and to defeat every one of those purposes for which speech was given to us, to wit, giving or receiving information or pleasure. For, if you would inform, a positive and dogmatical manner in advancing your sentiments may provoke contradiction and prevent a candid attention. If you wish information and improvement from the knowledge of others, and yet at the same time express yourself as firmly fix'd in your present opinions, modest, sensible men, who do not love disputation, will probably leave you undisturbed in the possession of your error. And by such a manner, you can seldom hope to recommend yourself in *pleasing* your hearers, or to persuade those whose concurrence you desire. Pope says, judiciously:

"Men should be taught as if you taught them not,
And things unknown propos'd as things forgot;"

farther recommending to us

"To speak, tho' sure, with seeming diffidence."

And he might have coupled with this line that which he has coupled with another, I think, less properly,

"For want of modesty is want of sense."

If you ask, Why less properly? I must repeat the lines,

"Immodest words admit of no defense,
For want of modesty is want of sense."

Now, is not *want of sense* (where a man is so unfortunate as to want it) some apology for his *want of modesty?* and would not the lines stand more justly thus?

"Immodest words admit *but* this defense,
That want of modesty is want of sense."

This, however, I should submit to better judgments.

My brother had, in 1720 or 1721, begun to print a newspaper. It was the second that appeared in America, and was called the New England Courant. The only one before it was the Boston News-Letter. I remember his being dissuaded by some of his friends from the undertaking, as not likely to succeed, one newspaper being, in their judgment, enough for America. At this time (1771) there are not less than five-and-twenty. He went on, however, with the undertaking, and after having worked in composing the types and printing off the sheets, I was employed to carry the papers thro' the streets to the customers.

He had some ingenious men among his friends, who amus'd themselves by writing little pieces for this paper, which gain'd it credit and made it more in demand, and these gentlemen often visited us. Hearing their conversations, and their accounts of the approbation their papers were received with, I was excited to try my hand among them; but, being still a boy, and suspecting that my brother would object to

printing anything of mine in his paper if he knew it to be mine, I contrived to disguise my hand, and, writing an anonymous paper, I put it in at night under the door of the printing-house. It was found in the morning, and communicated to his writing friends when they call'd in as usual. They read it, commented on it in my hearing, and I had the exquisite pleasure of finding it met with their approbation, and that, in their different guesses at the author, none were named but men of some character among us for learning and ingenuity. I suppose now that I was rather lucky in my judges, and that perhaps they were not really so very good ones as I then esteem'd them.

Encourag'd, however, by this, I wrote and convey'd in the same way to the press several more papers which were equally approv'd; and I kept my secret till my small fund of sense for such performances was pretty well exhausted, and then I discovered it, when I began to be considered a little more by my brother's acquaintance, and in a manner that did not quite please him, as he thought, probably with reason, that it tended to make me too vain. And, perhaps, this might be one occasion of the differences we began to have about this time. Though a brother, he considered himself as my master, and me as his apprentice, and, accordingly, expected the same services from me as he would from another, while I thought he demean'd me too much in some he requir'd of me, who from a brother expected more indulgence. Our disputes were often brought before our father, and I fancy I was either generally in the right, or else a better pleader, because the judgment was generally in my favor. But my brother was passionate, and had often beaten me, which I took extreamly amiss; and, thinking my apprenticeship very tedious, I was continually wishing for some opportunity of shortening it, which at length offered in a manner unexpected.

One of the pieces in our newspaper on some political point, which I have now forgotten, gave offense to the Assembly. He was taken up, censur'd, and imprison'd for a month, by the speaker's warrant, I suppose, because he would not discover his author. I too was taken up and examin'd before the council; but, tho' I did not give them any satisfaction, they content'd themselves with admonishing me, and dismissed me, considering me, perhaps, as an apprentice, who was bound to keep his master's secrets.

During my brother's confinement, which I resented a good deal, notwithstanding our private differences, I had the management of

the paper; and I made bold to give our rulers some rubs in it, which my brother took very kindly, while others began to consider me in an unfavorable light, as a young genius that had a turn for libelling and satyr. My brother's discharge was accompany'd with an order of the House (a very odd one), that *"James Franklin should no longer print the paper called the New England Courant."*

There was a consultation held in our printing-house among his friends, what he should do in this case. Some proposed to evade the order by changing the name of the paper; but my brother, seeing inconveniences in that, it was finally concluded on as a better way, to let it be printed for the future under the name of BENJAMIN FRANKLIN; and to avoid the censure of the Assembly, that might fall on him as still printing it by his apprentice, the contrivance was that my old indenture should be return'd to me, with a full discharge on the back of it, to be shown on occasion, but to secure to him the benefit of my service, I was to sign new indentures for the remainder of the term, which were to be kept private. A very flimsy scheme it was; however, it was immediately executed, and the paper went on accordingly, under my name for several months.

At length, a fresh difference arising between my brother and me, I took upon me to assert my freedom, presuming that he would not venture to produce the new indentures. It was not fair in me to take this advantage, and this I therefore reckon one of the first errata of my life; but the unfairness of it weighed little with me, when under the impression of resentment for the blows his passion too often urged him to bestow upon me, though he was otherwise not an ill-natured man: perhaps I was too saucy and provoking.

When he found I would leave him, he took care to prevent my getting employment in any other printing-house of the town, by going round and speaking to every master, who accordingly refus'd to give me work. I then thought of going to New York, as the nearest place where there was a printer; and I was rather inclin'd to leave Boston when I reflected that I had already made myself a little obnoxious to the governing party, and, from the arbitrary proceedings of the Assembly in my brother's case, it was likely I might, if I stay'd, soon bring myself into scrapes; and farther, that my indiscrete disputations about religion began to make me pointed at with horror by good people as an infidel or atheist. I determin'd on the point, but my father now siding with my brother, I was sensible that, if I

attempted to go openly, means would be used to prevent me. My friend Collins, therefore, undertook to manage a little for me. He agreed with the captain of a New York sloop for my passage, under the notion of my being a young acquaintance of his, that had got a naughty girl with child, whose friends would compel me to marry her, and therefore I could not appear or come away publicly. So I sold some of my books to raise a little money, was taken on board privately, and as we had a fair wind, in three days I found myself in New York, near 300 miles from home, a boy of but 17, without the least recommendation to, or knowledge of any person in the place, and with very little money in my pocket.

My inclinations for the sea were by this time worne out, or I might now have gratify'd them. But, having a trade, and supposing myself a pretty good workman, I offer'd my service to the printer in the place, old Mr. William Bradford, who had been the first printer in Pennsylvania, but removed from thence upon the quarrel of George Keith. He could give me no employment, having little to do, and help enough already; but says he, "My son at Philadelphia has lately lost his principal hand, Aquila Rose, by death; if you go thither, I believe he may employ you." Philadelphia was a hundred miles further; I set out, however, in a boat for Amboy, leaving my chest and things to follow me round by sea.

In crossing the bay, we met with a squall that tore our rotten sails to pieces, prevented our getting into the Kill, and drove us upon Long Island. In our way, a drunken Dutchman, who was a passenger too, fell overboard; when he was sinking, I reached through the water to his shock pate, and drew him up, so that we got him in again. His ducking sobered him a little, and he went to sleep, taking first out of his pocket a book, which he desir'd I would dry for him. It proved to be my old favorite author, Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress,* in Dutch, finely printed on good paper, with copper cuts, a dress better than I had ever seen it wear in its own language. I have since found that it has been translated into most of the languages of Europe, and suppose it has been more generally read than any other book, except perhaps the Bible. Honest John was the first that I know of who mix'd narration and dialogue; a method of writing very engaging to the reader, who in the most interesting parts finds himself, as it were, brought into the company and present at the discourse. De Foe in his *Cruso,* his *Moll Flanders, Religious Courtship,*

Family Instructor, and other pieces, has imitated it with success; and Richardson has done the same in his *Pamela,* etc.

When we drew near the island, we found it was at a place where there could be no landing, there being a great surf on the stony beach. So we dropt anchor, and swung round towards the shore. Some people came down to the water edge and hallow'd to us, as we did to them; but the wind was so high, and the surf so loud, that we could not hear so as to understand each other. There were canoes on the shore, and we made signs, and hallow'd that they should fetch us; but they either did not understand us, or thought it impracticable, so they went away, and night coming on, we had no remedy but to wait till the wind should abate; and, in the meantime, the boatman and I concluded to sleep, if we could; and so crowded into the scuttle, with the Dutchman, who was still wet, and the spray beating over the head of our boat, leak'd thro' to us, so that we were soon almost as wet as he. In this manner we lay all night, with very little rest; but, the wind abating the next day, we made a shift to reach Amboy before night, having been thirty hours on the water, without victuals, or any drink but a bottle of filthy rum, and the water we sail'd on being salt.

In the evening I found myself very feverish, and went into bed; but, having read somewhere that cold water drank plentifully was good for a fever, I follow'd the prescription; sweat plentiful most of the night, my fever left me, and in the morning, crossing the ferry, I proceeded on my journey on foot, having fifty miles to Burlington, where I was told I should find boats that would carry me the rest of the way to Philadelphia.

It rained very hard all the day; I was thoroughly soak'd, and by noon a good deal tired; so I stopt at a poor inn, where I staid all night, beginning now to wish that I had never left home. I cut so miserable a figure, too, that I found, by the questions ask'd me, I was suspected to be some runaway servant, and in danger of being taken up on that suspicion. However, I proceeded the next day, and got in the evening to an inn, within eight or ten miles of Burlington, kept by one Dr. Brown. He entered into conversation with me while I took some refreshment, and, finding I had read a little, became very sociable and friendly. Our acquaintance continu'd as long as he liv'd. He had been, I imagine, an itinerant doctor, for there was no town in England, or country in Europe, of which he could not give a very particular account. He had some letters, and was ingenious, but much

of an unbeliever, and wickedly undertook, some years after, to travestie the Bible in doggrel verse, as Cotton had done Virgil. By this means he set many of the facts in a very ridiculous light, and might have hurt weak minds if his work had been published; but it never was.

At his house I lay that night, and the next morning reach'd Burlington, but had the mortification to find that the regular boats were gone a little before my coming, and no other expected to go before Tuesday, this being Saturday; wherefore I returned to an old woman in the town, of whom I had bought gingerbread to eat on the water, and ask'd her advice. She invited me to lodge at her house till a passage by water should offer; and being tired with my foot travelling, I accepted the invitation. She understanding I was a printer, would have had me stay at that town and follow my business, being ignorant of the stock necessary to begin with. She was very hospitable, gave me a dinner of ox-cheek with great good will, accepting only a pot of ale in return; and I thought myself fix'd till Tuesday should come. However, walking in the evening by the side of the river, a boat came by, which I found was going towards Philadelphia, with several people in her. They took me in, and, as there was no wind, we row'd all the way; and about midnight, not having yet seen the city, some of the company were confident we must have passed it, and would row no farther; the others knew not where we were; so we put toward the shore, got into a creek, landed near an old fence, with the rails of which we made a fire, the night being cold, in October, and there we remained till daylight. Then one of the company knew the place to be Cooper's Creek, a little above Philadelphia, which we saw as soon as we got out of the creek, and arriv'd there about eight or nine o'clock on the Sunday morning, and landed at the Market-street wharf.

I have been the more particular in this description of my journey, and shall be so of my first entry into that city, that you may in your mind compare such unlikely beginnings with the figure I have since made there. I was in my working dress, my best clothes being to come round by sea. I was dirty from my journey; my pockets were stuff'd out with shirts and stockings, and I knew no soul nor where to look for lodging. I was fatigued with travelling, rowing, and want of rest, I was very hungry; and my whole stock of cash consisted of a Dutch dollar, and about a shilling in copper. The latter I gave the people of

the boat for my passage, who at first refus'd it, on account of my rowing; but I insisted on their taking it. A man being sometimes more generous when he has but a little money than when he has plenty, perhaps thro' fear of being thought to have but little.

Then I walked up the street, gazing about till near the market-house I met a boy with bread. I had made many a meal on bread, and, inquiring where he got it, I went immediately to the baker's he directed me to, in Second-street, and ask'd for bisket, intending such as we had in Boston; but they, it seems, were not made in Philadelphia. Then I asked for a three-penny loaf, and was told they had none such. So not considering or knowing the difference of money, and the greater cheapness nor the names of his bread, I bad him give me three-penny worth of any sort. He gave me, accordingly, three great puffy rolls. I was surpriz'd at the quantity, but took it, and, having no room in my pockets, walk'd off with a roll under each arm, and eating the other. Thus I went up Market-street as far as Fourth-street, passing by the door of Mr. Read, my future wife's father; when she, standing at the door, saw me, and thought I made, as I certainly did, a most awkward, ridiculous appearance. Then I turned and went down Chesnut-street and part of Walnut-street, eating my roll all the way, and, coming round, found myself again at Market-street wharf, near the boat I came in, to which I went for a draught of the river water; and, being filled with one of my rolls, gave the other two to a woman and her child that came down the river in the boat with us, and were waiting to go farther.

Thus refreshed, I walked again up the street, which by this time had many clean-dressed people in it, who were all walking the same way. I joined them, and thereby was led into the great meeting-house of the Quakers near the market. I sat down among them, and, after looking round awhile and hearing nothing said, being very drowsy thro' labor and want of rest the preceding night, I fell fast asleep, and continu'd so till the meeting broke up, when one was kind enough to rouse me. This was, therefore, the first house I was in, or slept in, in Philadelphia.

Walking down again toward the river, and, looking in the faces of people, I met a young Quaker man, whose countenance I lik'd, and, accosting him, requested he would tell me where a stranger could get lodging. We were then near the sign of the Three Mariners. "Here," says he, "is one place that entertains strangers, but it is not a

reputable house; if thee wilt walk with me, I'll show thee a better." He brought me to the Crooked Billet in Water-street. Here I got a dinner; and, while I was eating it, several sly questions were asked me, as it seemed to be suspected from my youth and appearance, that I might be some runaway.

After dinner, my sleepiness return'd, and being shown to a bed, I lay down without undressing, and slept till six in the evening, was call'd to supper, went to bed again very early, and slept soundly till next morning. Then I made myself as tidy as I could, and went to Andrew Bradford the printer's. I found in the shop the old man his father, whom I had seen at New York, and who, travelling on horseback, had got to Philadelphia before me. He introduc'd me to his son, who receiv'd me civilly, gave me a breakfast, but told me he did not at present want a hand, being lately suppli'd with one; but there was another printer in town, lately set up, one Keimer, who, perhaps, might employ me; if not, I should be welcome to lodge at his house, and he would give me a little work to do now and then till fuller business should offer.

THE THEORY AND PRACTICE OF VIRTUE

At the time I establish'd myself in Pennsylvania, there was not a good bookseller's shop in any of the colonies to the southward of Boston. In New York and Philadelphia the printers were indeed stationers; they sold only paper, etc., almanacs, ballads, and a few common school-books. Those who lov'd reading were oblig'd to send for their books from England; the members of the Junto [1] had each a few. We had left the alehouse, where we first met, and hired a room to hold our club in. I propos'd that we should all of us bring our books to that room, where they would not only be ready to consult in our conferences, but become a common benefit, each of us being at liberty to borrow such as he wish'd to read at home. This was accordingly done, and for some time contented us.

Finding the advantage of this little collection, I propos'd to render the benefit from books more common, by commencing a public subscription library. I drew a sketch of the plan and rules that would be

[1] The name of the club organized by Franklin and his friends for reading and discussion.

necessary, and got a skilful conveyancer, Mr. Charles Brockden, to put the whole in form of articles of agreement to be subscribed, by which each subscriber engag'd to pay a certain sum down for the first purchase of books, and an annual contribution for increasing them. So few were the readers at that time in Philadelphia, and the majority of us so poor, that I was not able, with great industry, to find more than fifty persons, mostly young tradesmen, willing to pay down for this purpose forty shillings each, and ten shillings per annum. On this little fund we began. The books were imported; the library was opened one day in the week for lending to the subscribers, on their promissory notes to pay double the value if not duly returned. The institution soon manifested its utility, was imitated by other towns, and in other provinces. The libraries were augmented by donations; reading became fashionable; and our people, having no publick amusements to divert their attention from study, became better acquainted with books, and in a few years were observ'd by strangers to be better instructed and more intelligent than people of the same rank generally are in other countries.

When we were about to sign the above-mentioned articles, which were to be binding on us, our heirs, etc., for fifty years, Mr. Brockden, the scrivener, said to us, "You are young men, but it is scarcely probable that any of you will live to see the expiration of the term fix'd in the instrument." A number of us, however, are yet living; but the instrument was after a few years rendered null by a charter that incorporated and gave perpetuity to the company.

The objections and reluctances I met with in soliciting the subscriptions, made me soon feel the impropriety of presenting one's self as the proposer of any useful project, that might be suppos'd to raise one's reputation in the smallest degree above that of one's neighbors, when one has need of their assistance to accomplish that project. I therefore put myself as much as I could out of sight, and started it as a scheme of a *number of friends,* who had requested me to go about and propose it to such as they thought lovers of reading. In this way my affair went on more smoothly, and I ever after practis'd it on such occasions; and, from my frequent successes, can heartily recommend it. The present little sacrifice of your vanity will afterwards be amply repaid. If it remains a while uncertain to whom the merit belongs, some one more vain than yourself will be encouraged to claim it, and then even envy will be disposed to do you

justice by plucking those assumed feathers, and restoring them to their right owner.

This library afforded me the means of improvement by constant study, for which I set apart an hour or two each day, and thus repair'd in some degree the loss of the learned education my father once intended for me. Reading was the only amusement I allow'd myself. I spent no time in taverns, games, or frolicks of any kind; and my industry in my business continu'd as indefatigable as it was necessary. I was indebted for my printing-house; I had a young family coming on to be educated, and I had to contend with for business two printers, who were established in the place before me. My circumstances, however, grew daily easier. By original habits of frugality continuing, and my father having, among his instructions to me when a boy, frequently repeated a proverb of Solomon, "Seest thou a man diligent in his calling, he shall stand before kings, he shall not stand before mean men," I from thence considered industry as a means of obtaining wealth and distinction, which encourag'd me, tho' I did not think that I should ever literally *stand before kings,* which, however, has since happened; for I have stood before *five,* and even had the honour of sitting down with one, the King of Denmark, to dinner.

We have an English proverb that says, *"He that would thrive, must ask his wife."* It was lucky for me that I had one as much dispos'd to industry and frugality as myself. She assisted me cheerfully in my business, folding and stitching pamphlets, tending shop, purchasing old linen rags for the paper-makers, etc., etc. We kept no idle servants, our table was plain and simple, our furniture of the cheapest. For instance, my breakfast was a long time bread and milk (no tea), and I ate it out of a twopenny earthen porringer, with a pewter spoon. But mark how luxury will enter families, and make a progress, in spite of principle: being call'd one morning to breakfast, I found it in a China bowl, with a spoon of silver! They had been bought for me without my knowledge by my wife, and had cost her the enormous sum of three-and-twenty shillings, for which she had no other excuse or apology to make, but that she thought *her* husband deserv'd a silver spoon and China bowl as well as any of his neighbors. This was the first appearance of plate and China in our house, which afterward, in a course of years, as our wealth increas'd, augmented gradually to several hundred pounds in value.

I had been religiously educated as a Presbyterian; and tho' some of the dogmas of that persuasion, such as *the eternal decrees of God, election, reprobation,* etc., appeared to me unintelligible, others doubtful, and I early absented myself from the public assemblies of the sect, Sunday being my studying day, I never was without some religious principles. I never doubted, for instance, the existence of the Deity; that he made the world, and govern'd it by his Providence; that the most acceptable service of God was the doing good to man; that our souls are immortal; and that all crime will be punished, and virtue rewarded, either here or hereafter. These I esteem'd the essentials of every religion; and, being to be found in all the religions we had in our country, I respected them all, tho' with different degrees of respect, as I found them more or less mix'd with other articles, which, without any tendency to inspire, promote, or confirm morality, serv'd principally to divide us, and make us unfriendly to one another. This respect to all, with an opinion that the worst had some good effects, in duc'd me to avoid all discourse that might tend to lessen the good opinion another might have of his own religion; and as our province increas'd in people, and new places of worship were continually wanted, and generally erected by voluntary contribution, my mite for such purpose, whatever might be the sect, was never refused.

Tho' I seldom attended any public worship, I had still an opinion of its propriety, and of its utility when rightly conducted, and I regularly paid my annual subscription for the support of the only Presbyterian minister or meeting we had in Philadelphia. He us'd to visit me sometimes as a friend, and admonish me to attend his administrations, and I was now and then prevail'd on to do so, once for five Sundays successively. Had he been in my opinion a good preacher, perhaps I might have continued, notwithstanding the occasion I had for the Sunday's leisure in my course of study; but his discourses were chiefly either polemic arguments, or explanations of the peculiar doctrines of our sect, and were all to me very dry, uninteresting, and unedifying, since not a single moral principle was inculcated or enforc'd, their aim seeming to be rather to make us Presbyterians than good citizens.

At length he took for his text that verse of the fourth chapter of Philippians, *"Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, honest, just, pure, lovely, or of good report, if there be any virtue, or any praise, think on these things."* And I imagin'd, in a sermon on such

a text, we could not miss of having some morality. But he confin'd himself to five points only, as meant by the apostle, viz.: I. Keeping holy the Sabbath day. 2. Being diligent in reading the holy Scriptures. 3. Attending duly the publick worship. 4. Partaking of the Sacrament. 5. Paying a due respect to God's ministers. These might be all good things; but, as they were not the kind of good things that I expected from that text, I despaired of ever meeting with them from any other, was disgusted, and attended his preaching no more. I had some years before compos'd a little Liturgy, or form of prayer, for my own private use (viz., in 1728), entitled, *Articles of Belief and Acts of Religion*. I return'd to the use of this, and went no more to the public assemblies. My conduct might be blameable, but I leave it, without attempting further to excuse it; my present purpose being to relate facts, and not to make apologies for them.

It was about this time I conceiv'd the bold and arduous project of arriving at moral perfection. I wish'd to live without committing any fault at any time; I would conquer all that either natural inclination, custom, or company might lead me into. As I knew, or thought I knew, what was right and wrong, I did not see why I might not always do the one and avoid the other. But I soon found I had undertaken a task of more difficulty than I had imagined. While my care was employ'd in guarding against one fault, I was often surprised by another; habit took the advantage of inattention; inclination was sometimes too strong for reason. I concluded, at length, that the mere speculative conviction that it was our interest to be completely virtuous, was not sufficient to prevent our slipping; and that the contrary habits must be broken, and good ones acquired and established, before we can have any dependence on a steady, uniform rectitude of conduct. For this purpose I therefore contrived the following method.

In the various enumerations of the moral virtues I had met with in my reading, I found the catalogue more or less numerous, as different writers included more or fewer ideas under the same name. Temperance, for example, was by some confined to eating and drinking, while by others it was extended to mean the moderating every other pleasure, appetite, inclination, or passion, bodily or mental, even to our avarice and ambition. I propos'd to myself, for the sake of clearness, to use rather more names, with fewer ideas annex'd to each, than a few names with more ideas; and I included under thirteen names of virtues all that at that time occurr'd to me as necessary or

desirable, and annexed to each a short precept, which fully express'd the extent I gave to its meaning.

These names of virtues, with their precepts, were:

1. Temperance.

Eat not to dullness; drink not to elevation.

2. Silence.

Speak not but what may benefit others or yourself; avoid trifling conversation.

3. Order.

Let all your things have their places; let each part of your business have its time.

4. Resolution.

Resolve to perform what you ought; perform without fail what you resolve.

5. Frugality.

Make no expense but to do good to others or yourself; i.e., waste nothing.

6. Industry.

Lose no time; be always employ'd in something useful; cut off all unnecessary actions.

7. Sincerity.

Use no hurtful deceit; think innocently and justly, and, if you speak, speak accordingly.

8. Justice.

Wrong none by doing injuries, or omitting the benefits that are your duty.

9. Moderation.

Avoid extreams; forbear resenting injuries so much as you think they deserve.

10. Cleanliness.

Tolerate no uncleanliness in body, cloaths, or habitation.

11. Tranquillity.

Be not disturbed at trifles, or at accidents common or unavoidable.

12. Chastity.

Rarely use venery but for health or offspring, never to dulness, weakness, or the injury of your own or another's peace or reputation.

13. Humility.

Imitate Jesus and Socrates.

I made a little book, in which I allotted a page for each of the virtues. I rul'd each page with red ink, so as to have seven columns, one

for each day of the week, marking each column with a letter for the day. I cross'd these columns with thirteen red lines, marking the beginning of each line with the first letter of one of the virtues, on which line, and in its proper column, I might mark, by a little black spot, every fault I found upon examination to have been committed respecting that virtue upon that day.

I determined to give a week's strict attention to each of the virtues successively. Thus, in the first week, my great guard was to avoid every the least offence against *Temperance,* leaving the other virtues to their ordinary chance, only marking every evening the faults of the day. Thus, if in the first week I could keep my first line, marked T, clear of spots, I suppos'd the habit of that virtue so much strengthen'd, and its opposite weaken'd, that I might venture extending my attention to include the next, and for the following week keep both lines clear of spots. Proceeding thus to the last, I could go thro' a course compleat in thirteen weeks, and four courses in a year. And like him who, having a garden to weed, does not attempt to eradicate all the bad herbs at once, which would exceed his reach and his strength, but works on one of the beds at a time, and, having accomplish'd the first, proceeds to a second, so I should have, I hoped, the encouraging pleasure of seeing on my pages the progress I made in virtue, by clearing successively my lines of their spots, till in the end, by a number of courses, I should be happy in viewing a clean book, after a thirteen weeks' daily examination. . . .

My scheme of Order gave me the most trouble; and I found that, tho' it might be practicable where a man's business was such as to leave him the disposition of his time, that of a journeyman printer, for instance, it was not possible to be exactly observed by a master, who must mix with the world, and often receive people of business at their own hours. *Order,* too, with regard to places for things, papers, etc., I found extreamly difficult to acquire. I had not been early accustomed to it, and, having an exceeding good memory, I was not so sensible of the inconvenience attending want of method. This article, therefore, cost me so much painful attention, and my faults in it vexed me so much, and I made so little progress in amendment, and had such frequent relapses, that I was almost ready to give up the attempt, and content myself with a faulty character in that respect, like the man who, in buying an ax of a smith, my neighbour, desired to have the whole of its surface as bright as the edge. The smith con-

sented to grind it bright for him if he would turn the wheel; he turn'd, while the smith press'd the broad face of the ax hard and heavily on the stone, which made the turning of it very fatiguing. The man came every now and then from the wheel to see how the work went on, and at length would take his ax as it was, without farther grinding. "No," said the smith, "turn on, turn on; we shall have it bright by-and-by; as yet, it is only speckled." "Yes," says the man, *"but I think I like a speckled ax best."* And I believe this may have been the case with many, who, having, for want of some such means as I employ'd, found the difficulty of obtaining good and breaking bad habits in other points of vice and virtue, have given up the struggle, and concluded that *"a speckled ax was best";* for something, that pretended to be reason, was every now and then suggesting to me that such extream nicety as I exacted of myself might be a kind of foppery in morals, which, if it were known, would make me ridiculous; that a perfect character might be attended with the inconvenience of being envied and hated; and that a benevolent man should allow a few faults in himself, to keep his friends in countenance.

In truth, I found myself incorrigible with respect to Order; and now I am grown old, and my memory bad, I feel very sensibly the want of it. But, on the whole, tho' I never arrived at the perfection I had been so ambitious of obtaining, but fell far short of it, yet I was, by the endeavour, a better and a happier man than I otherwise should have been if I had not attempted it; as those who aim at perfect writing by imitating the engraved copies, tho' they never reach the wish'd-for excellence of those copies, their hand is mended by the endeavour, and is tolerable while it continues fair and legible.

It may be well my posterity should be informed that to this little artifice, with the blessing of God, their ancestor ow'd the constant felicity of his life, down to his 79th year, in which this is written. What reverses may attend the remainder is in the hand of Providence; but, if they arrive, the reflection on past happiness enjoy'd ought to help his bearing them with more resignation. To Temperance he ascribes his long-continued health, and what is still left to him of a good constitution; to Industry and Frugality, the early easiness of his circumstances and acquisition of his fortune, with all that knowledge that enabled him to be a useful citizen, and obtained for him some degree of reputation among the learned; to Sincerity and Justice, the

confidence of his country, and the honorable employs it conferred upon him; and to the joint influence of the whole mass of the virtues, even in the imperfect state he was able to acquire them, all that evenness of temper, and that cheerfulness in conversation, which makes his company still sought for, and agreeable even to his younger acquaintance. I hope, therefore, that some of my descendants may follow the example and reap the benefit.

Gibbon's Autobiography

THE eminent historian, Edward Gibbon (1727–1794), early fell in love with "the grandeur that was Rome." Withdrawn from Oxford by his father because he had become a Roman Catholic there, he was sent to Lausanne to live with a Calvinist minister. Under his tutelage Gibbon returned to the Protestant fold. Especially important was his reading of French and Roman literature and history during his five years' residence at Lausanne. The next twenty years, except for a visit to Italy, were spent in England, partly at the Gibbon estate in Hampshire, partly in London as a member of Parliament and a government commissioner. Returning to Lausanne in 1783 to complete his *History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire,* he lived there almost to the day of his death. Gibbon is famous as the author of one majestic work which he wrought at through many years with fastidious devotion. Less praised but more read is the small volume, *Memoirs of My Life and Writings,* begun in his fifty-second year and left unfinished. The autobiography was first edited and published in 1796 by Gibbon's friend, Lord Sheffield, who also issued his letters. Gibbon carefully planned the account of his life and composed it in language less sonorous than that of the *History*. The long periods of his historical descriptions march with pomp and splendor through his pages, while the autumnal reflections of his *Memoirs* are relatively subdued in coloring and movement. In the first paragraph of his autobiography he states his intention: "In the fifty-second year of my age, after the completion of an arduous and successful work, I now propose to employ some moments of my leisure in reviewing the simple transactions of a private and literary life. Truth, naked, unblushing truth, the first virtue of more serious history, must be the sole recommendation of this personal narrative. The style shall be simple and familiar: but style is the image of character; and the habits of correct writing may produce, without labour or design, the appearance of art and study. My own amusement is my motive, and will be my reward." The passages chosen from this first impor-

tant formal autobiography in English literature illustrate Gibbon's accuracy and sincerity, as well as the stately beauty of his style.

[The full text of Gibbon's *Autobiography,* edited by John Murray, was published in 1894; the incomplete text, arranged by Lord Sheffield, appeared in 1799.]

GIBBON'S EDUCATION

My first introduction to the historic scenes, which have since engaged so many years of my life, must be ascribed to an accident. In the summer of 1751, I accompanied my father on a visit to Mr. Hoare's, in Wiltshire; but I was less delighted with the beauties of Stourhead than with discovering in the library a common book, the "Continuation of Echard's Roman History," which is indeed executed with more skill and taste than the previous work. To me the reigns of the successors of Constantine were absolutely new; and I was immersed in the passage of the Goths over the Danube, when the summons of the dinner-bell reluctantly dragged me from my intellectual feast. This transient glance served rather to irritate than to appease my curiosity; and as soon as I returned to Bath I procured the second and third volumes of Howell's "History of the World," which exhibit the Byzantine period on a larger scale. Mahomet and his Saracens soon fixed my attention, and some instinct of criticism directed me to the genuine sources. Simon Ockley, an original in every sense, first opened my eyes; and I was led from one book to another till I had ranged round the circle of Oriental history. Before I was sixteen I had exhausted all that could be learned in English of the Arabs and Persians, the Tartars and Turks; and the same ardour urged me to guess at the French of D'Herbelot, and to construe the barbarous Latin of Pococke's "Abulfarajius."[1] Such vague and multifarious reading could not teach me to think, to write, or to act, and the only principle that darted a ray of light into the indigested chaos was an early and rational application to the order of time and place. The maps of Cellarius and Wells imprinted in my mind the picture of ancient geography; from Stranchius I imbibed the elements of chronology; the Tables of Helvicus and Anderson, the Annals of Usher and Prideaux, distinguished the connection of events, and engraved the multitude of names and dates in a clear and indelible series. But in the discussion of the first ages I over-

[1] Abulfaraj was a thirteenth-century Syrian bishop whose works were translated into Latin by Edward Pocock, seventeenth-century English scholar.

leaped the bounds of modesty and use. In my childish balance I presumed to weigh the systems of Scaliger and Petavius, of Marsham and Newton, which I could seldom study in the originals; and my sleep has been disturbed by the difficulty of reconciling the Septuagint with the Hebrew computation. I arrived at Oxford with a stock of erudition that might have puzzled a doctor, and a degree of ignorance of which a school-boy would have been ashamed. . . .

A traveller who visits Oxford or Cambridge is surprised and edified by the apparent order and tranquillity that prevail in the seats of the English Muses. In the most celebrated universities of Holland, Germany, and Italy, the students, who swarm from different countries, are loosely dispersed in private lodgings at the houses of the burghers. They dress according to their fancy and fortune; and in the intemperate quarrels of youth and wine, their swords, though less frequently than of old, are sometimes stained with each other's blood. The use of arms is banished from our English universities; the uniform habit of the academies, the square cap and black gown, is adapted to the civil and even clerical profession; and from the doctor in divinity to the undergraduate, the degrees of learning and age are externally distinguished. Instead of being scattered in a town, the students of Oxford and Cambridge are united in colleges; their maintenance is provided at their own expense, or that of the founders; and the stated hours of the hall and chapel represent the discipline of a regular and, as it were, a religious community. The eyes of the traveller are attracted by the size or beauty of the public edifices, and the principal colleges appear to be so many palaces which a liberal nation has erected and endowed for the habitation of science. My own introduction to the University of Oxford forms a new era in my life, and at the distance of forty years I still remember my first emotions of surprise and satisfaction. In my fifteenth year I felt myself suddenly raised from a boy to a man: the persons whom I respected as my superiors in age and academical rank entertained me with every mark of attention and civility; and my vanity was flattered by the velvet cap and silk gown which distinguish a gentleman commoner from a plebeian student. A decent allowance, more money than a school-boy had ever seen, was at my own disposal; and I might command among the tradesmen of Oxford an indefinite and dangerous latitude of credit. A key was delivered into my hands which gave me the free uses of a numerous and learned library. My apartment consisted of three elegant and

well-furnished rooms in the new building, a stately pile, of Magdalen College; and the adjacent walks, had they been frequented by Plato's disciples, might have been compared to the Attic shade on the banks of the Ilissus. Such was the fair prospect of my entrance (April 3, 1752) into the University of Oxford.

A venerable prelate, whose taste and erudition must reflect honour on the society in which they were formed, has drawn a very interesting picture of his academical life. "I was educated," says Bishop Lowth, "in the University of Oxford. I enjoyed all the advantages, both public and private, which that famous seat of learning so largely affords. I spent many years in that illustrious society, in a well-regulated course of useful discipline and studies, and in the agreeable and improving commerce of gentlemen and of scholars; in a society where emulation without envy, ambition without jealousy, contention without animosity, incited industry and awakened genius; where a liberal pursuit of knowledge and a genuine freedom of thought was raised, encouraged, and pushed forward by example, by commendation, and by authority. I breathed the same atmosphere that the Hookers, the Chillingworths, and the Lockes had breathed before; whose benevolence and humanity were as extensive as their vast genius and comprehensive knowledge; who always treated their adversaries with civility and respect; who made candour, moderation, and liberal judgment as much the rule and law as the subject of their discourse. And do you reproach me with my education in this place, and with my relation to this most respectable body, which I shall always esteem my greatest advantage and my highest honour?" I transcribe with pleasure this eloquent passage, without examining what benefits or what rewards were derived by Hooker, or Chillingworth, or Locke, from their academical institution; without inquiring whether in this angry controversy the spirit of Lowth himself is purified from the intolerant zeal which Warburton had ascribed to the genius of the place. It may indeed be observed that the atmosphere of Oxford did not agree with Mr. Locke's constitution, and that the philosopher justly despised the academical bigots who expelled his person and condemned his principles. The expression of gratitude is a virtue and a pleasure: a liberal mind will delight to cherish and celebrate the memory of its parents; and the teachers of science are the parents of the mind. I applaud the filial piety, which it is impossible for me to imitate, since I must not confess an imaginary debt to

assume the merit of a just or generous retribution. To the University of Oxford I acknowledge no obligation; and she will as cheerfully renounce me for a son as I am willing to disclaim her for a mother. I spent fourteen months at Magdalen College; they proved the fourteen months the most idle and unprofitable of my whole life; the reader will pronounce between the school and the scholar; but I cannot affect to believe that Nature had disqualified me for all literary pursuits. The specious and ready excuse of my tender age, imperfect preparation, and hasty departure may doubtless be alleged; nor do I wish to defraud such excuses of their proper weight. Yet in my sixteenth year I was not devoid of capacity or application; even my childish reading had displayed an early though blind propensity for books; and the shallow flood might have been taught to flow in a deep channel and a clear stream. In the discipline of a well-constituted academy, under the guidance of skilful and vigilant professors. I should gradually have risen from translations to originals, from the Latin to the Greek classics, from dead languages to living science; my hours would have been occupied by useful and agreeable studies, the wanderings of fancy would have been restrained, and I should have escaped the temptations of idleness which finally precipitated my departure from Oxford.

After carrying me to Putney, to the house of his friend Mr. Mallet, by whose philosophy I was rather scandalised than reclaimed, it was necessary for my father to form a new plan of education, and to devise some method which if possible might effect the cure of my spiritual malady.[2] After much debate it was determined, from the advice and personal experience of Mr. Eliot (now Lord Eliot) to fix me, during some years, at Lausanne in Switzerland. Mr. Frey, a Swiss gentleman of Basel, undertook the conduct of the journey. We left London the 19th of June, crossed the sea from Dover to Calais, travelled post through several provinces of France by the direct road of St. Quentin, Rheims, Langres, Besançon, and arrived the 30th of June at Lausanne, where I was immediately settled under the roof and tuition of M. Pavilliard, a Calvinist minister.

The first marks of my father's displeasure rather astonished than

[2] The "spiritual malady," according to the elder Gibbon's thinking, was his son's conversion to the Roman Church.

afflicted me. When he threatened to banish, and disown, and disinherit a rebellious son, I cherished a secret hope that he would not be able or willing to effect his menaces, and the pride of conscience encouraged me to sustain the honourable and important part which I was now acting. My spirits were raised and kept alive by the rapid motion of my journey, the new and various scenes of the Continent, and the civility of Mr. Frey, a man of sense, who was not ignorant of books or the world. But after he had resigned me into Pavilliard's hands, and I was fixed in my new habitation, I had leisure to contemplate the strange and melancholy prospect before me. My first complaint arose from my ignorance of the language. In my childhood I had once studied the French grammar, and I could imperfectly understand the easy prose of a familiar subject. But when I was thus suddenly cast on a foreign land, I found myself deprived of the use of speech and of hearing; and, during some weeks, incapable not only of enjoying the pleasures of conversation, but even of asking or answering a question in the common intercourse of life. To a home-bred Englishman every object, every custom was offensive; but the native of any country might have been disgusted with the general aspect of his lodging and entertainment. I had now exchanged my elegant apartment in Magdalen College for a narrow, gloomy street, the most unfrequented of an unhandsome town, for an old inconvenient house, and for a small chamber ill-contrived and ill-furnished, which, on the approach of winter, instead of a companionable fire, must be warmed by the dull invisible heat of a stove. From a man I was again degraded to the dependence of a school-boy. M. Pavilliard managed my expenses, which had been reduced to a diminutive state. I received a small monthly allowance for my pocket-money, and helpless and awkward as I have ever been, I no longer enjoyed the indispensable comfort of a servant. My condition seemed as destitute of hope as it was devoid of pleasure. I was separated for an indefinite, which appeared an infinite term from my native country, and I had lost all connection with my Catholic friends. I have since reflected with surprise that, as the Romish clergy of every part of Europe maintain a close correspondence with each other, they never attempted, by letters or messages, to rescue me from the hands of the heretics, or at least to confirm my zeal and constancy in the profession of the faith. Such was my first introduction to Lausanne, a place where I spent nearly

five years with pleasure and profit, which I afterwards revisited without compulsion, and which I have finally selected as the most grateful retreat for the decline of my life.

But it is the peculiar felicity of youth that the most unpleasing objects and events seldom make a deep or lasting impression—it forgets the past, enjoys the present, and anticipates the future. At the flexible age of sixteen I soon learned to endure, and gradually to adopt, the new forms of arbitrary manners. The real hardships of my situation were alienated by time. Had I been sent abroad in a more splendid style, such as the fortune and bounty of my father might have supplied, I might have returned home with the same stock of language and science which our countrymen usually import from the Continent. An exile and a prisoner as I was, their example betrayed me into some irregularities of wine, of play, and of idle excursions; but I soon felt the impossibility of associating with them on equal terms, and after the departure of my first acquaintance, I held a cold and civil correspondence with their successors. This seclusion from English society was attended with the most solid benefits. In the Pays de Vaud, the French language is used with less imperfection than in most of the distant provinces of France. In Pavilliard's family, necessity compelled me to listen and to speak, and if I was at first disheartened by the apparent slowness, in a few months I was astonished by the rapidity of my progress. My pronunciation was formed by the constant repetition of the same sounds; the variety of words and idioms, the rules of grammar, and distinctions of genders, were impressed in my memory; ease and freedom were obtained by practice; correctness and elegance by labour; and before I was recalled home, French, in which I spontaneously thought, was more familiar than English to my ear, my tongue, and my pen. The first effect of this opening knowledge was the revival of my love of reading, which had been chilled at Oxford; and I soon turned over, without much choice, almost all the French books in my tutor's library. Even these amusements were productive of real advantage. My taste and judgment were now somewhat riper. I was introduced to a new mode of style and literature: by the comparison of manners and opinions my views were enlarged, my prejudices were corrected, and a copious voluntary abstract of the "Histoire de l'Eglise et de l'Empire," by Le Sueur, may be placed in a middle line between my childish and my manly

studies. As soon as I was able to converse with the natives, I began to feel some satisfaction in their company. My awkward timidity was polished and emboldened, and I frequented, for the first time, assemblies of men and women. The acquaintance of the Pavilliards prepared me by degrees for more elegant society. I was received with kindness and indulgence in the best families of Lausanne, and it was in one of these that I formed an intimate and lasting connection with M. Deyverdun, a young man of an amiable temper and excellent understanding. In the arts of fencing and dancing, small indeed was my proficiency, and some months were idly wasted in the riding-school. My unfitness to bodily exercise reconciled me to a sedentary life, and the horse, the favourite of my countrymen, never contributed to the pleasures of my youth.

My obligations to the lessons of M. Pavilliard, gratitude will not suffer me to forget. He was endowed with a clear head and a warm heart; his innate benevolence had assuaged the spirit of the Church; he was rational, because he was moderate. In the course of his studies he had acquired a just though superficial knowledge of most branches of literature; by long practice he was skilled in the arts of teaching; and he laboured with assiduous patience to know the character, gain the affection, and open the mind of his English pupil. As soon as we began to understand each other, he gently led me, from a blind and undistinguishing love of reading, into the path of instruction. I consented with pleasure that a portion of the morning hours should be consecrated to a plan of modern history and geography, and to the critical perusal of the French and Latin classics; and at each step I felt myself invigorated by the habits of application and method. . . .

Such, from my arrival at Lausanne, during the first eighteen or twenty months (July 1753–March 1755), were my useful studies, the foundation of all my future improvements. But every man who rises above the common level has received two educations: the first from his teachers; the second, more personal and important, from himself. He will not, like the fanatics of the last age, define the moment of grace; but he cannot forget the era of his life in which his mind has expanded to its proper form and dimensions. My worthy tutor had the good sense and modesty to discern how far he could be useful: as soon as he felt that I advanced beyond his speed and measure he

wisely left me to my genius; and the hours of lesson were soon lost in the voluntary labour of the whole morning, and sometimes of the whole day. The desire of prolonging my time gradually confirmed the salutary habit of early rising, to which I have always adhered, with some regard to seasons and situations; but it is happy for my eyes and my health that my temperate ardour has never been seduced to trespass on the hours of the night. During the last three years of my residence at Lausanne, I may assume the merit of serious and solid application; but I am tempted to distinguish the last eight months of the year 1755 as the period of the most extraordinary diligence and rapid progress. In my French and Latin translations I adopted an excellent method, which, from my own success, I would recommend to the imitation of students. I chose some classic writer, such as Cicero and Vertot, the most approved for purity and elegance of style. I translated, for instance, an epistle of Cicero into French; and after throwing it aside till the words and phrases were obliterated from my memory, I re-translated my French into such Latin as I could find, and then compared each sentence of my imperfect version with the ease, the grace, the propriety of the Roman orator. A similar experiment was made on several pages of the Revolutions of Vertot; I turned them into Latin, returned them after a sufficient interval into my own French, and again scrutinised the resemblance or dissimilitude of the copy and the original. By degrees I was less ashamed, by degrees I was more satisfied with myself; and I persevered in the practice of these double translations, which filled several books, till I had acquired the knowledge of both idioms, and the command at least of a correct style. This useful exercise of writing was accompanied and succeeded by the more pleasing occupation of reading the best authors. The perusal of the Roman classics was at once my exercise and reward. Dr. Middleton's History, which I then appreciated above its true value, naturally directed me to the writings of Cicero. . . . I read, with application and pleasure, all the epistles, all the orations, and the most important treatises of rhetoric and philosophy; and as I read I applauded the observation of Quintillian, that every student may judge of his own proficiency by the satisfaction which he receives from the Roman orator. I tasted the beauties of language, I breathed the spirit of freedom, and I imbibed from his precepts and examples the public and private sense of a man.

THE CONCEPTION AND COMPLETION OF HIS HISTORY

It was at Rome, on the 15th of October, 1764, as I sat musing amidst the ruins of the Capitol, while the barefooted friars were singing vespers in the Temple of Jupiter, that the idea of writing the Decline and Fall of the city first started to my mind. But my original plan was circumscribed to the decay of the city rather than of the empire; and though my reading and reflections began to point towards that object, some years elapsed, and several avocations intervened, before I was seriously engaged in the execution of that laborious work.

No sooner was I settled in my house and library, than I undertook the composition of the first volume of my History. At the outset all was dark and doubtful; even the title of the work, the true era of the "Decline and Fall of the Empire," the limits of the introduction, the division of the chapters, and the order of the narrative; and I was often tempted to cast away the labour of seven years. The style of an author should be the image of his mind, but the choice and command of language is the fruit of exercise. Many experiments were made before I could hit the middle tone between a dull chronicle and a rhetorical declamation; three times did I compose the first chapter, and twice the second and third, before I was tolerably satisfied with their effect. In the remainder of the way I advanced with a more equal and easy pace; but the fifteenth and sixteenth chapters have been reduced, by three successive revisals, from a large volume to their present size; and they might still be compressed without any loss of facts or sentiments. An opposite fault may be imputed to the concise and superficial narrative of the first reigns from Commodus to Alexander; a fault of which I have never heard, except from Mr. Hume in his last journey to London. Such an oracle might have been consulted and obeyed with rational devotion; but I was soon disgusted with the modest practice of reading the manuscript to my friends. Of such friends some will praise from politeness, and some will criticise from vanity. The author himself is the best judge of his own performance; no one has so deeply meditated on the subject; no one is so sincerely interested in the event. . . .

The volume [3] of my History, which had been somewhat delayed by the novelty and tumult of a first session [4] was now ready for the press. After the perilous adventure had been declined by my friend Mr. Elmsly, I agreed, upon easy terms, with Mr. Thomas Cadell, a respectable bookseller, and Mr. William Strahan, an eminent printer; and they undertook the care and risk of the publication, which derived more credit from the name of the shop than from that of the author. The last revisal of the proofs was submitted to my vigilance; and many blemishes of style, which had been invisible in the manuscript, were discovered and corrected in the printed sheet. So moderate were our hopes, that the original impression had been stinted to five hundred, till the number was doubled by the prophetic taste of Mr. Strahan. During this awful interval I was neither elated by the ambition of fame nor depressed by the apprehension of contempt. My diligence and accuracy were attested by my own conscience. History is the most popular species of writing, since it can adapt itself to the highest or the lowest capacity. I had chosen an illustrious subject. Rome is familiar to the school-boy and the statesman; and my narrative was deduced from the last period of classical reading. I had likewise flattered myself that an age of light and liberty would receive without scandal an inquiry into the human causes of the progress and establishment of Christianity.

I am at a loss how to describe the success of the work without betraying the vanity of the writer. The first impression was exhausted in a few days; a second and third edition were scarcely adequate to the demand; and the bookseller's property was twice invaded by the pirates of Dublin. My book was on every table, and almost on every toilette; the historian was crowned by the taste or fashion of the day; nor was the general voice disturbed by the barking of any profane critic. The favour of mankind is most freely bestowed on a new acquaintance of any original merit; and the mutual surprise of the public and their favourite is productive of those warm sensibilities which at a second meeting can no longer be rekindled. If I listened to the music of praise, I was more seriously satisfied with the approbation of my judges. The candour of Dr. Robertson embraced his disciple; a letter from Mr. Hume overpaid the labour of ten years;

[3] The first volume of *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* was published in England in 1776.

[4] The session of Parliament at which Gibbon was a new member.

but I have never presumed to accept a place in the triumvirate of British historians.

I have presumed to mark the moment of conception; I shall now commemorate the hour of my final deliverance. It was on the day, or rather night, of the 27th of June, 1787, between the hours of eleven and twelve, that I wrote the last lines of the last page in a summer-house in my garden.[5] After laying down my pen, I took several turns in a berceau, or covered walk of acacias, which commands a prospect of the country, the lake, and the mountains. The air was temperate, the sky was serene, the silver orb of the moon was reflected from the waters, and all nature was silent. I will not dissemble the first emotions of joy on the recovery of my freedom, and perhaps the establishment of my fame. But my pride was soon humbled, and a sober melancholy was spread over my mind, by the idea that I had taken an everlasting leave of an old and agreeable companion, and that whatsoever might be the future date of my History, the life of the historian must be short and precarious. I will add two facts, which have seldom occurred in the composition of six, or at least of five, quartos. 1. My first rough manuscript, without any intermediate copy, has been sent to the press. 2. Not a sheet has been seen by any human eyes, excepting those of the author and the printer. The faults and the merits are exclusively my own.

CONCLUDING REFLECTIONS

When I contemplate the common lot of mortality, I must acknowledge that I have drawn a high prize in the lottery of life. The far greater part of the globe is overspread with barbarism or slavery. In the civilised world, the most numerous class is condemned to ignorance and poverty; and the double fortune of my birth in a free and enlightened country, in an honourable and wealthy family, is the lucky chance of an unit against millions. The general probability is about three to one that a new-born infant will not live to complete his fiftieth year. I have now passed that age, and may fairly estimate the present value of my existence in the threefold division of mind, body, and estate.

[5] At Lausanne, Switzerland.

1. The first and indispensable requisite of happiness is a clear conscience, unsullied by the reproach or remembrance of an unworthy action.

"Hic murus aheneus esto,
Nil conscire sibi, nulla pallescere culpa." [6]

I am endowed with a cheerful temper, a moderate sensibility, and a natural disposition to repose rather than to activity: some mischievous appetites and habits have perhaps been corrected by philosophy or time. The love of study, a passion which derives fresh vigour from enjoyment, supplies each day, each hour, with a perpetual source of independent and rational pleasure; and I am not sensible of any decay of the mental faculties. The original soil has been highly improved by cultivation; but it may be questioned whether some flowers of fancy, some grateful errors, have not been eradicated with the roots of prejudice. 2. Since I have escaped from the long perils of my childhood, the serious advice of a physician has seldom been requisite. "The madness of superfluous health" I have never known; but my tender constitution has been fortified by time, and the inestimable gift of the sound and peaceful slumbers of infancy may be imputed both to the mind and body. 3. I have already described the merits of my society and situation; but these enjoyments would be tasteless or bitter if their possession were not assured by an annual and adequate supply. According to the scale of Switzerland I am a rich man; and I am indeed rich, since my income is superior to my expense, and my expense is equal to my wishes. My friend Lord Sheffield has kindly relieved me from the cares to which my taste and temper are most adverse: shall I add, that since the failure of my first wishes I have never entertained any serious thoughts of a matrimonial connection?

I am disgusted with the affectation of men of letters who complain that they have renounced a substance for a shadow; and that their fame (which sometimes is no insupportable weight) affords a poor compensation for envy, censure, and persecution. My own experience, at least, has taught me a very different lesson. Twenty happy years have been animated by the labour of my History; and

[6] Let this be one's brazen wall, to have no consciousness of guilt nor grow pale through any wrongdoing.—Horace: *Epistle to Maecenas.*

its success has given me a name, a rank, a character in the world, to which I should not otherwise have been entitled. The freedom of my writings has indeed provoked an implacable tribe; but as I was safe from the stings, I was soon accustomed to the buzzing of the hornets. My nerves are not tremblingly alive, and my literary temper is so happily framed, that I am less sensible of pain than of pleasure. The rational pride of an author may be offended rather than flattered by vague indiscriminate praise; but he cannot, he should not, be indifferent to the fair testimonies of private and public esteem. Even his moral sympathy may be gratified by the idea that now, in the present hour, he is imparting some degree of amusement or knowledge to his friends in a distant land: that one day his mind will be familiar to the grandchildren of those who are yet unborn. I cannot boast of the friendship or favour of princes; the patronage of English literature has long since been devolved on our booksellers, and the measure of their liberality is the least ambiguous test of our common success. Perhaps the golden mediocrity of my fortune has contributed to fortify my application.

The present is a fleeting moment, the past is no more; and our prospect of futurity is dark and doubtful. This day may possibly be my last; but the laws of probability, so true in general, so fallacious in particular, still allow about fifteen years. I shall soon enter into the period which, as the most agreeable of his long life, was selected by the judgment and experience of the sage Fontenelle.[7] His choice is approved by the eloquent historian of nature,[8] who fixes our moral happiness to the mature season in which our passions are supposed to be calmed, our duties fulfilled, our ambition satisfied, our fame and fortune established on a solid basis. In private conversation, that great and amiable man added the weight of his own experience; and this autumnal felicity might be exemplified in the lives of Voltaire, Hume, and many other men of letters. I am far more inclined to embrace than to dispute this comfortable doctrine. I will not suppose any premature decay of the mind or body; but I must reluctantly observe that two causes, the abbreviation of time, and the failure of hope, will always tinge with a browner shade the evening of life.

[7] Bernard le Bovier de Fontenelle (1667–1757). French philosopher and poet.
[8] Buffon, the French naturalist, who was a contemporary of Gibbon.

THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

Southey's "Life of Nelson"

One of the most diligent and prolific writers in English literature was the minor poet of the Lake Country, Robert Southey (1774–1843). While at Oxford he met Coleridge, who was visiting there; together they planned an ideal community, or Pantisocracy, on the banks of the Susquehanna River in Pennsylvania, but lack of money caused the abandonment of this Utopian scheme. Soon after this Southey's uncle, living in Lisbon, invited his nephew to visit him. This visit and a subsequent one turned the mind of the young idealist strongly to Spanish and Portuguese literatures, in which he read widely and from which he gathered material for literary work. In 1803, after a short stay in Ireland as private secretary to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Southey settled at Greta Hall, near Keswick in the Lake District, where he spent the rest of his life. Here he devoted himself strenuously and methodically to the writing of poetry, history, literary criticism, translations, and biography, an enormous output filling, in his collected works, fifty large volumes. In addition to this prodigious accomplishment, he carried on an extensive correspondence. A constant reader in several literatures, he accumulated a library of fourteen thousand volumes. Honors came to him in the award of a pension for his contributions to literature and in his appointment as Poet Laureate. Southey's long verse narratives are almost forgotten, but several of his shorter poems are immortal. Of his prose writings, his *Life of Nelson* has been reprinted in many editions and continues to be read as one of the most popular biographies ever written. This is due to its fine prose style, its comparative brevity, and the glamour of its heroic subject, Horatio Nelson. England's greatest sea-fighter from the age of twelve spent most of his life in battle-ships, fought in many waters, was rewarded by the passionate love of his country, the bestowal of the title of Viscount and the rank of Admiral, and at

last by a tomb in St. Paul's Cathedral. Most of his notable service was along the coasts of Italy, France, Spain, and Portugal. His last battle off Cape Trafalgar is rated as one of the great naval engagements of history, decisive in determining the supremacy of England on the sea. Southey's vivid account of this fight in the following selection is eloquent with the glow of patriotic emotion. Writing his *Life of Nelson* only a few years after the stirring events recorded, he could hardly be calmly dispassionate; he naturally shows animus against the French and throughout the book he exalts Nelson, though mentioning his weaknesses. He wrote in order that the *Life* might "become a manual for the young sailor which he may carry about with him till he has treasured up the example in his memory and in his heart." The *Life of Nelson* is famous not for its accuracy but as a tribute to a national hero whose valor is a vital tradition symbolized in monument and renewed in song.

[Southey's *Life of Nelson* has been issued in many editions since it was first published in 1813.]

THE BATTLE OF TRAFALGAR

(October 21, 1805)

THE station which Nelson had chosen was some fifty or sixty miles to the west of Cadiz, near Cape St. Mary's. At this distance he hoped to decoy the enemy out, while he guarded against the danger of being caught with a westerly wind near Cadiz, and driven within the Straits. The blockade of the port was rigorously enforced, in hopes that the combined fleet [1] might be forced to sea by want. The Danish vessels, therefore, which were carrying provisions from the French ports in the bay,[2] under the name of Danish property, to all the little ports from Ayamonte to Algeciras, from whence they were conveyed in coasting boats to Cadiz, were seized. Without this proper exertion of power, the blockade would have been rendered nugatory, by the advantage thus taken of the neutral flag. The supplies from France were thus effectually cut off. There was now every indication that the enemy would speedily venture out: officers and men were in the highest spirits at the prospect of giving them a decisive blow: such, indeed, as would put an end to all further contest upon the seas. Theatrical amusements were performed every evening in most of the ships: and "God save the King" was the hymn with which the sports concluded. "I verily believe," said Nelson (writing on the 6th of October), "that the country will soon be put to some expense on my account; either a monument, or a new pension and honours; for I have not the smallest doubt but that a very few days, almost hours, will put us in battle. The success no man can insure; but for the fighting them, if they can be got at, I pledge myself.—The sooner the better! I don't like to have these things upon my mind." . . .

On the 9th Nelson sent Collingwood [3] what he called, in his diary, the Nelson touch. "I send you," said he, "my plan of attack,

[1] The combined French and Spanish fleet.
[2] Bay of Biscay.
[3] Admiral Collingwood, second in command.

as far as a man dare venture to guess at the very uncertain position the enemy may be found in: but it is to place you perfectly at ease respecting my intentions, and to give full scope to your judgment for carrying them into effect. We can, my dear Coll, have no little jealousies. We have only one great object in view, that of annihilating our enemies, and getting a glorious peace for our country. No man has more confidence in another than I have in you; and no man will render your services more justice than your very old friend Nelson and Bronte." [4] The order of sailing was to be the order of battle: the fleet in two lines, with an advanced squadron of eight of the fastest sailing two-deckers. The second in command, having the entire direction of his line, was to break through the enemy, about the twelfth ship from their rear: he would lead through the centre, and the advanced squadron was to cut off three or four ahead of the centre. This plan was to be adapted to the strength of the enemy, so that they should always be one-fourth superior to those whom they cut off. Nelson said, "That his admirals and captains, knowing his precise object to be that of a close and decisive action, would supply any deficiency of signals, and act accordingly. In case signals cannot be seen or clearly understood, no captain can do wrong if he places his ship alongside that of an enemy."

One of the last orders of this admirable man was, that the name and family of every officer, seaman, and marine, who might be killed or wounded in action, should be, as soon as possible, returned to him, in order to be transmitted to the chairman of the patriotic fund, that the case might be taken into consideration, for the benefit of the sufferer, or his family. . . .

Soon after daylight Nelson came upon deck. The 21st of October was a festival in his family, because on that day his uncle, Capt. Suckling, in the Dreadnought, with two other line of battle ships, had beaten off a French squadron of four sail of the line, and three frigates. Nelson, with that sort of superstition from which few persons are entirely exempt, had more than once expressed his persuasion that this was to be the day of his battle also; and he was well pleased at seeing his prediction about to be verified. The wind was now from the west, light breezes, with a long heavy swell. Signal was made to bear down upon the enemy in two lines; and the fleet set

[4] Nelson had two noble titles—Viscount Nelson and Duke of Bronte.

all sail. Collingwood, in the Royal Sovereign, led the lee line [5] of thirteen ships; the Victory led the weather line of fourteen. Having seen that all was as it should be, Nelson retired to his cabin, and wrote the following prayer:

"May the great God, whom I worship, grant to my country, and for the benefit of Europe in general, a great and glorious victory, and may no misconduct in any one tarnish it; and may humanity after victory be the predominant feature in the British fleet! For myself individually, I commit my life to Him that made me; and may His blessing alight on my endeavours for serving my country faithfully! To Him I resign myself, and the just cause which is entrusted to me to defend. Amen, Amen, Amen."

Blackwood went on board the Victory about six. He found him in good spirits, but very calm; not in that exhilaration which he had felt upon entering into battle at Aboukir and Copenhagen: he knew that his own life would be particularly aimed at, and seems to have looked for death with almost as sure an expectation as for victory. His whole attention was fixed upon the enemy. They tacked to the northward, and formed their line on the larboard tack: thus bringing the shoals of Trafalgar and St. Pedro under the lee of the British, and keeping the port of Cadiz open for themselves. This was judiciously done: and Nelson, aware of all the advantages which it gave them, made signal to prepare to anchor.

Villeneuve [6] was a skilful seaman; worthy of serving a better master, and a better cause. His plan of defence was as well conceived, and as original, as the plan of attack. He formed the fleet in a double line; every alternate ship being about a cable's length to windward of her second ahead and astern. Nelson, certain of a triumphant issue to the day, asked Blackwood what he should consider as a victory. That officer answered that, considering the handsome way in which battle was offered by the enemy, their apparent determination for a fair trial of strength, and the situation of the land, he thought it would be a glorious result if fourteen were captured. He replied: "I shall not be satisfied with less than twenty." Soon afterwards he asked him, if he did not think there was a signal wanting. Capt. Blackwood made answer, that he thought the whole fleet seemed very clearly to understand what they were about. These words were

[5] The lee line is here the East, opposite the weather line, the West.
[6] The French admiral.

scarcely spoken before that signal was made, which will be remembered as long as the language, or even the memory of England, shall endure;—Nelson's last signal:—"ENGLAND EXPECTS EVERY MAN TO DO HIS DUTY!" It was received throughout the fleet with a shout of answering acclamation, made sublime by the spirit which it breathed, and the feeling which it expressed. "Now," said Lord Nelson, "I can do no more. We must trust to the great Disposer of all events, and the justice of our cause. I thank God for this great opportunity of doing my duty."

He wore that day, as usual, his admiral's frock coat, bearing on the left breast four stars, of the different orders with which he was invested. Ornaments which rendered him so conspicuous a mark for the enemy, were beheld with ominous apprehensions by his officers. It was known that there were riflemen on board the French ships; and it could not be doubted but that his life would be particularly aimed at. They communicated their fears to each other; and the surgeon, Mr. Beatty, spoke to the chaplain, Dr. Scott, and to Mr. Scott, the public secretary, desiring that some person would entreat him to change his dress, or cover the stars; but they knew that such a request would highly displease him. "In honour I gained them," he had said, when such a thing had been hinted to him formerly, "and in honour I will die with them." Mr. Beatty, however, would not have been deterred by any fear of exciting his displeasure, from speaking to him himself upon a subject, in which the weal of England, as well as the life of Nelson, was concerned,—but he was ordered from the deck before he could find an opportunity. This was a point upon which Nelson's officers knew that it was hopeless to remonstrate or reason with him; but both Blackwood, and his own captain, Hardy, represented to him how advantageous to the fleet it would be for him to keep out of action as long as possible; and he consented at last to let the Leviathan and the Téméraire, which were sailing abreast of the Victory, be ordered to pass ahead. Yet even here the last infirmity of this noble mind [7] was indulged, for these ships could not pass ahead if the Victory continued to carry all her sail; and so far was Nelson from shortening sail, that it

[7] Milton's *Lycidas* (70–72):

> Fame is the spur that the clear spirit doth raise
> (That last infirmity of noble mind)
> To scorn delights and live laborious days.

was evident he took pleasure in pressing on, and rendering it impossible for them to obey his own orders. A long swell was setting into the bay of Cadiz: our ships, crowding all sail, moved majestically before it, with light winds from the south-west. The sun shone on the sails of the enemy; and their well formed line, with their numerous three-deckers, made an appearance which any other assailants would have thought formidable;—but the British sailors only admired the beauty and the splendour of the spectacle; and, in full confidence of winning what they saw, remarked to each other, what a fine sight yonder ships would make at Spithead!

The French admiral, from the Bucentaure, beheld the new manner in which his enemy was advancing—Nelson and Collingwood each leading his line; and pointing them out to his officers, he is said to have exclaimed, that such conduct could not fail to be successful. Yet Villeneuve had made his own dispositions with the utmost skill, and the fleets under his command waited for the attack with perfect coolness. Ten minutes before twelve they opened their fire. Eight or nine of the ships immediately ahead of the Victory, and across her bows, fired single guns at her, to ascertain whether she was yet within their range. As soon as Nelson perceived that their shot passed over him, he desired Blackwood, and Capt. Prowse, of the Sirius, to repair to their respective frigates; and, on their way, to tell all the captains of the line of battle ships that he depended on their exertions; and that, if by the prescribed mode of attack they found it impracticable to get into action immediately, they might adopt whatever they thought best, provided it led them quickly and closely alongside an enemy. As they were standing on the front of the poop, Blackwood took him by the hand, saying, he hoped soon to return and find him in possession of twenty prizes. He replied, "God bless you, Blackwood; I shall never see you again."

Nelson's column was steered about two points more to the north than Collingwood's, in order to cut off the enemy's escape into Cadiz: the lee line, therefore, was first engaged. "See," cried Nelson, pointing to the Royal Sovereign, as she steered right for the centre of the enemy's line, cut through it astern of the Santa Anna, three-decker, and engaged her at the muzzle of her guns on the starboard side: "see how that noble fellow, Collingwood, carries his ship into action!" Collingwood, delighted at being first in the heat of the fire, and knowing the feelings of his commander and old friend, turned

to his captain, and exclaimed: "Rotherham, what would Nelson give to be here!" Both these brave officers, perhaps, at this moment thought of Nelson with gratitude, for a circumstance which had occurred on the preceding day. Admiral Collingwood, with some of the captains, having gone on board the Victory, to receive instructions, Nelson inquired of him, where his captain was, and was told, in reply, that they were not upon good terms with each other. "Terms!" said Nelson;—"good terms with each other!" Immediately he sent a boat for Captain Rotherham; led him, as soon as he arrived, to Collingwood, and saying,—"Look; yonder are the enemy!" bade them shake hands like Englishmen.

The enemy continued to fire a gun at a time at the Victory, till they saw that a shot had passed through her main-top-gallant sail; then they opened their broadsides, aiming chiefly at her rigging, in the hope of disabling her before she could close with them. Nelson, as usual, had hoisted several flags, lest one should be shot away. The enemy showed no colours till late in the action, when they began to feel the necessity of having them to strike. For this reason, the Santissima Trinidad, Nelson's old acquaintance, as he used to call her, was distinguishable only by her four decks; and to the bow of this opponent he ordered the Victory to be steered. Meantime an incessant raking fire was kept up upon the Victory. The admiral's secretary was one of the first who fell; he was killed by a cannon shot while conversing with Hardy. Capt. Adair of the marines, with the help of a sailor, endeavoured to remove the body from Nelson's sight, who had a great regard for Mr. Scott: but he anxiously asked: "Is that poor Scott that's gone?" and being informed that it was indeed so, exclaimed: "Poor fellow!" Presently a double-headed shot struck a party of marines, who were drawn up on the poop, and killed eight of them: upon which Nelson immediately desired Capt. Adair to disperse his men round the ship, that they might not suffer so much from being together. A few minutes afterwards a shot struck the fore-brace bits on the quarter deck, and passed between Nelson and Hardy, a splinter from the bit tearing off Hardy's buckle and bruising his foot. Both stopped, and looked anxiously at each other, each supposed the other to be wounded. Nelson then smiled, and said, "This is too warm work, Hardy, to last long."

The Victory had not yet returned a single gun; fifty of her men had been by this time killed or wounded, and her main-top-mast,

with all her studding sails and her booms, shot away. Nelson declared, that, in all his battles, he had seen nothing which surpassed the cool courage of his crew on this occasion. At four minutes after twelve, she opened her fire from both sides of her deck. It was not possible to break the enemy's line without running on board one of their ships: Hardy informed him of this, and asked him which he would prefer. Nelson replied: "Take your choice, Hardy, it does not signify much." The master was ordered to put the helm to port, and the Victory ran on board the Redoutable, just as her tiller ropes were shot away. The French ship received her with a broadside; then instantly let down her lower deck ports, for fear of being boarded through them, and never afterwards fired a great gun during the action. Her tops, like those of all the enemy's ships, were filled with riflemen. Nelson never placed musketry in his tops; he had a strong dislike to the practice; not merely because it endangers setting fire to the sails, but also because it is a murderous sort of warfare, by which individuals may suffer, and a commander now and then be picked off, but which never can decide the fate of a general engagement.

Capt. Harvey, in the Téméraire, fell on board the Redoubtable on the other side. Another enemy was in like manner on board the Téméraire; so that these four ships formed as compact a tier as if they had been moored together, their heads lying all the same way. The lieutenants of the Victory, seeing this, depressed their guns of the middle and lower decks, and fired with a diminished charge, lest the shot should pass through, and injure the Téméraire. And because there was danger that the Redoutable might take fire from the lower-deck guns, the muzzles of which touched her side when they were run out, the fire-man of each gun stood ready with a bucket of water; which, as soon as the gun was discharged, he dashed into the hole made by the shot. An incessant fire was kept up from the Victory from both sides; her larboard guns playing upon the Bucentaure and the huge Santissima Trinidad.

It had been part of Nelson's prayer, that the British fleet might be distinguished by humanity in the victory which he expected. Setting an example himself, he twice gave orders to cease firing upon the Redoutable, supposing that she had struck, because her great guns were silent; for, as she carried no flag, there was no means of instantly ascertaining the fact. From this ship, which he had

thus twice spared, he received his death. A ball fired from her mizen-top, which, in the then situation of the two vessels, was not more than fifteen yards from that part of the deck where he was standing, struck the epaulette on his left shoulder, about a quarter after one, just in the heat of action. He fell upon his face, on the spot which was covered with his poor secretary's blood.

Hardy, who was a few steps from him, turning round, saw three men raising him up.—"They have done for me at last, Hardy," said he.—"I hope not," cried Hardy.—"Yes!" he replied; "my backbone is shot through." Yet even now, not for a moment losing his presence of mind, he observed, as they were carrying him down the ladder, that the tiller ropes, which had been shot away, were not yet replaced, and ordered that new ones should be rove immediately:—then, that he might not be seen by the crew, he took out his handkerchief, and covered his face and his stars. Had he but concealed these badges of honour from the enemy, England, perhaps, would not have had cause to receive with sorrow the news of the battle of Trafalgar. The cockpit was crowded with wounded and dying men; over whose bodies he was with some difficulty conveyed, and laid upon a pallet in the midshipmen's berth. It was soon perceived, upon examination, that the wound was mortal. This, however, was concealed from all except Capt. Hardy, the chaplain, and the medical attendants. He himself being certain, from the sensation in his back, and the gush of blood he felt momently within his breast, that no human care could avail him, insisted that the surgeon should leave him, and attend to those to whom he might be useful; "For," said he, "you can do nothing for me."—All that could be done was to fan him with paper, and frequently to give him lemonade to alleviate his intense thirst. He was in great pain, and expressed much anxiety for the event of the action, which now began to declare itself. As often as a ship struck, the crew of the Victory hurraed; and at every hurra, a visible expression of joy gleamed in the eyes, and marked the countenance of the dying hero. But he became impatient to see Capt. Hardy; and as that officer, though often sent for, could not leave the deck, Nelson feared that some fatal cause prevented him, and repeatedly cried: "Will no one bring Hardy to me? He must be killed! He is surely dead!"—An hour and ten minutes elapsed from the time when Nelson received his wound, before Hardy could come to him. They shook hands in silence;

Hardy in vain struggling to suppress the feelings of that most painful and yet sublimest moment. "Well, Hardy," said Nelson, "how goes the day with us?"—"Very well," replied Hardy; "ten ships have struck, but five of the van have tacked, and show an intention to bear down upon the Victory. I have called two or three of our fresh ships round, and have no doubt of giving them a drubbing." —"I hope," said Nelson, "none of our ships have struck?" Hardy answered "There was no fear of that." Then, and not till then, Nelson spoke of himself. "I am a dead man, Hardy," said he: "I am going fast:—it will be all over with me soon. Come nearer to me. Let my dear Lady Hamilton have my hair, and all other things belonging to me." Hardy observed, that he hoped Mr. Beatty could yet hold out some prospect of life. "Oh, no!" he replied: "it is impossible. My back is shot through. Beatty will tell you so." Capt. Hardy then, once more shook hands with him; and, with a heart almost bursting, hastened upon deck.

By this time all feeling below the breast was gone; and Nelson, having made the surgeon ascertain this, said to him: "You know I am gone, I know it. I feel something rising in my breast,"—putting his hand on his left side,—"which tells me so." And upon Beatty's inquiring whether his pain was very great? he replied, "So great, that he wished he was dead. Yet," said he, in a lower voice, "one would like to live a little longer too!" Capt. Hardy, some fifty minutes after he had left the cockpit, returned; and, again taking the hand of his dying friend and commander, congratulated him on having gained a complete victory. How many of the enemy were taken he did not know, as it was impossible to perceive them distinctly; but fourteen or fifteen at least. "That's well," cried Nelson, "but I bargained for twenty." And then, in a stronger voice, he said: "Anchor, Hardy; anchor." Hardy, upon this, hinted that Admiral Collingwood would take upon himself the direction of affairs. "Not while I live, Hardy," said the dying Nelson, ineffectually endeavouring to raise himself from the bed: "Do you anchor." His previous order for preparing to anchor had shown how clearly he foresaw the necessity of this. Presently, calling Hardy back, he said to him in a low voice, "Don't throw me overboard:" and he desired that he might be buried by his parents, unless it should please the king to order otherwise. "Kiss me, Hardy," said he. Hardy knelt down and kissed his cheek: and Nelson said, "Now I am satisfied. Thank

God I have done my duty." Hardy stood over him in silence for a moment or two, then knelt again and kissed his forehead. "Who is that?" said Nelson; and being informed, he replied, "God bless you, Hardy." And Hardy then left him—for ever.

Nelson now desired to be turned upon his right side, and said, "I wish I had not left the deck; for I shall soon be gone." Death was, indeed, rapidly approaching. He said to the chaplain, "Doctor, I have *not* been a *great* sinner." His articulation now became difficult; but he was distinctly heard to say, "Thank God, I have done my duty." These words he repeatedly pronounced; and they were the last words which he uttered. He expired at thirty minutes after four,—three hours and a quarter after he had received his wound.

Moore's Life of Byron"

The popular poet, Thomas Moore (1779–1852), was born in Dublin and educated at Trinity College in the University there. Because of his social graces, facility in versifying, and unusual musical ability, he was welcomed into English aristocratic society, becoming the special favorite of Lord Moira, at whose country mansion he spent much time. Through his influence Moore received a government appointment in Bermuda, whither he went in 1803. After a short stay in the island, he turned over the office to a deputy, proceeded to New York, toured the principal Eastern cities, visited Canada, and returned to England; he had been absent about fourteen months. London again became his residence, and his chief occupation the writing of poetry—tuneful trifles, long narratives, metrical lampoons, and considerable sentimental verse both grave and gay. After his marriage in 1811, he lived at various times in quiet country retreats in England, but his popularity with metropolitan society kept him much in London, with occasional trips to Paris. His reputation had been established by the publication of his *Irish Melodies* and other poems, and after the appearance of his Oriental verse romance, *Lalla Rookh,* in 1817, his fame for a while almost equaled Scott's and Byron's. Meanwhile, in 1811, Moore had met Byron, with whom he formed as close a friendship as the temperamental differences of the two poets would permit. Their association, without being intimate and prolonged, was cordial and frequent, and many letters passed between them. While Byron was living in Venice, Moore visited him twice. On the last of these visits, in 1821, Byron gave Moore the manuscript of his Autobiography, or Memoirs, with the understanding that the work was to be published after the author's death. The Memoirs were subsequently burned by Moore, however, in accordance with the wishes of Byron's relatives; he agreed shortly afterwards, at the request of Byron's friend Hobhouse, to prepare the Life of the poet from his letters and journals. This well-known work appeared in 1830.

In the following selection Moore depicts the closing scenes in the poet's stormy career. Worn out, unhappy, and restless, Byron hailed with gladness the opportunity of helping to deliver Greece from the Turks. He sailed from Genoa with an expeditionary force, and after a few months in that classic land in which he had lived and sung in earlier years, he died in 1824 at Missolonghi. His heart was buried there. The fascination of his personality, his genius, the alternating gloom and glory of his troubled life, and his romantic fate, have served to make Lord Byron one of the most appealing subjects for biography in the whole range of literature. Moore's Life of him, while not adequate, is valuable as an expression of contemporary opinion and therefore extremely useful to later biographers and to students of Byron and his times.

[The standard edition of Moore's *Life, Letters, and Journals of Lord Byron* was published by John Murray, London, 1830.]

CHILDE HAROLD'S LAST PILGRIMAGE

That Lord Byron, on a nearer view of the state of Greece, saw it much in the light I have here regarded it in,[1] his letters leave no room to doubt. Neither was the impression he had early received of the Greeks themselves at all improved by the present renewal of his acquaintance with them. Though making full allowance for the causes that had produced their degeneracy, he still saw that they were grossly degenerate, and must be dealt with and counted upon accordingly. . . . With such means and materials, the work of regeneration, he knew, must be slow; and the hopelessness he therefore felt as to the chances of ever connecting his name with any essential or permanent benefit to Greece, gives to the sacrifice he now made of himself a far more touching interest than had the consciousness of dying for some great object been at once his incitement and reward. He but looked upon himself,—to use a favourite illustration of his own,—as one of the many waves that must break and die upon the shore, before the tide they help to advance can reach its full mark. "What signifies Self," was his generous thought, "if a single spark of that which would be worthy of the past can be bequeathed unquenchedly to the future?" Such was the devoted feeling with which he embarked in the cause of Italy; and these words, which, had they remained only words, the unjust world would have pronounced but an idle boast, have now received from his whole course in Greece a practical comment, which gives them all the right of truth to be engraved solemnly on his tomb.

Though with so little hope of being able to serve signally the cause, the task of at least lightening, by his interposition, some of the manifold mischiefs that pressed upon it, might yet, he thought, be within his reach. To convince the Government and the Chiefs of the paralysing effect of their dissensions;—to inculcate that spirit

[1] "The state of Greece" at this time (1824), as Moore has shown, was a weak and divided government with a number of selfish leaders, or chiefs, in control of a small navy and army, largely made up of adventurers, without discipline and resources.

of union among themselves which alone could give strength against their enemies:—to endeavour to humanise the feelings of the belligerents on both sides, so as to take from the war that character of barbarism which deterred the more civilised friends of freedom through Europe from joining in it;—such were, in addition to the now essential aid of his money, the great objects which he proposed to effect by his interference; and to these he accordingly, with all the candour, clear-sightedness, and courage which so pre-eminently distinguished his great mind, applied himself. . . .

On the morning of the 22d of January, his birthday,—the last my poor friend was ever fated to see,—he came from his bedroom into the apartment where Colonel Stanhope and some others were assembled, and said with a smile, "You were complaining the other day that I never write any poetry now. This is my birthday, and I have just finished something which, I think, is better than what I usually write." He then produced to them those beautiful stanzas, which, though already known to most readers, are far too affectionately associated with this closing scene of his life to be omitted among its details. Taking into consideration, indeed, every thing connected with these verses,—the last tender aspirations of a loving spirit which they breathe, the self-devotion to a noble cause which they so nobly express, and that consciousness of a near grave glimmering sadly through the whole,—there is perhaps no production within the range of mere human composition round which the circumstances and feelings under which it was written cast so touching an interest.

January 22nd.

On this day I complete my thirty-sixth year.

'Tis time this heart should be unmoved,
Since others it hath ceased to move;
Yet though I cannot be beloved,
Still let me love!

My days are in the yellow leaf;
The flowers and fruits of love are gone;
The worm, the canker, and the grief
Are mine alone!

The fire that on my bosom preys,
Is lone as some volcanic isle;
No torch is kindled at its blaze—
A funeral pile!

The hope, the fear, the jealous care
The exalted portion of the pain
And power of love, I cannot share,
But wear the chain.

But 'tis not *thus*—and 'tis not *here*—
Such thoughts should shake my soul, nor *now*,
Where glory decks the hero's bier,
Or binds his brow.

The sword, the banner, and the field,
Glory and Greece, around me see!
The Spartan, borne upon his shield,
Was not more free.

Awake! (not Greece—she *is* awake!)
Awake, my spirit! Think through *whom*
Thy life-blood tracks its parent lake,
And then strike home!

Tread those reviving passions down,
Unworthy manhood!—unto thee
Indifferent should the smile or frown
Of beauty be.

If thou regret'st thy youth, *why live?*
The land of honourable death
Is here:—up to the field, and give
Away thy breath!

Seek out—less often sought than found—
A soldier's grave, for thee the best;
Then look around and choose thy ground,
And take thy rest.

"We perceived," says Count Gamba, "from these lines, as well as from his daily conversations, that his ambition and his hope were

irrevocably fixed upon the glorious objects of his expedition to Greece, and that he had made up his mind to 'return victorious, or return no more.' Indeed, he often said to me, 'Others may do as they please—they may go—but I stay here, *that is certain.*' The same determination was expressed in his letters to his friends; and this resolution was not unaccompanied with the very natural presentiment—that he should never leave Greece alive. He one day asked his faithful servant, Tita, whether he thought of returning to Italy? 'Yes,' said Tita: 'if your Lordship goes, I go.' Lord Byron smiled, and said, 'No, Tita, I shall never go back from Greece—either the Turks, or the Greeks, or the climate, will prevent that.' "

To those who have, from his childhood, traced him through these pages, it must be manifest, I think, that Lord Byron was not formed to be long-lived. Whether from any hereditary defect in his organisation,—as he himself, from the circumstance of both his parents having died young, concluded,—or from those violent means he so early took to counteract the natural tendency of his habit, and reduce himself to thinness, he was, almost every year, as we have seen, subject to attacks of indisposition, by more than one of which life was seriously endangered. The capricious course which he at all times pursued respecting diet,—his long fastings, his expedients for the allayment of hunger, his occasional excesses in the most unwholesome food, and, during the latter part of his residence in Italy, his indulgence in the use of spirituous beverages,—all this could not be otherwise than hurtful and undermining to his health; while his constant recourse to medicine,—daily, as it appears, and in large quantities,—both evinced and, no doubt, increased the derangement of his digestion. When to all this we add the wasteful wear of spirits and strength from the slow corrosion of sensibility, the warfare of the passions, and the workings of a mind that allowed itself no Sabbath, it is not to be wondered at that the vital principle in him should so soon have burnt out, or that, at the age of thirty-three, he should have had—as he himself drearily expresses it—"an old feel." To feed the flame, the all-absorbing flame, of his genius, the whole powers of his nature, physical as well as moral, were sacrificed;—to present that grand and costly conflagration to the world's eyes, in which,

"Glittering, like a palace set on fire,
His glory, while it shone, but ruin'd him!"

It was on the very day when, as I have mentioned, the intelligence of his sister's recovery reached him, that, having been for the last three or four days prevented from taking exercise by the rains, he resolved, though the weather still looked threatening, to venture out on horseback. Three miles from Missolonghi, Count Gamba and himself were overtaken by a heavy shower, and returned to the town walls wet through and in a state of violent perspiration. It had been their usual practice to dismount at the walls and return to their house in a boat, but, on this day, Count Gamba, representing to Lord Byron how dangerous it would be, warm as he then was, to sit exposed so long to the rain in a boat, entreated of him to go back the whole way on horseback. To this, however, Lord Byron would not consent; but said, laughingly, "I should make a pretty soldier indeed, if I were to care for such a trifle." They accordingly dismounted and got into the boat as usual.

About two hours after his return home he was seized with a shuddering, and complained of fever and rheumatic pains. "At eight that evening," says Count Gamba, "I entered his room. He was lying on a sofa restless and melancholy. He said to me, 'I suffer a great deal of pain. I do not care for death, but these agonies I cannot bear.' "

The following day he rose at his accustomed hour,—transacted business, and was even able to take his ride in the olive woods, accompanied, as usual, by his long train of Suliotes. He complained, however, of perpetual shudderings, and had no appetite. On his return home he remarked to Fletcher that his saddle, he thought, had not been perfectly dried since yesterday's wetting, and that he felt himself the worse for it. This was the last time he ever crossed the threshold alive. In the evening Mr. Finlay and Mr. Millingen called upon him. "He was at first (says the latter gentleman) gayer than usual; but on a sudden became pensive."

On the evening of the 11th his fever, which was pronounced to be rheumatic, increased; and on the 12th he kept his bed all day, complaining that he could not sleep, and taking no nourishment whatever. The two following days, though the fever had apparently

diminished, he became still more weak, and suffered much from pains in the head.

It was not till the 14th that his physician, Dr. Bruno, finding the sudorifics which he had hitherto employed to be unavailing, began to urge upon his patient the necessity of being bled. Of this, however, Lord Byron would not hear. He had evidently but little reliance on his medical attendant; and from the specimens this young man has since given of his intellect to the world, it is, indeed, lamentable, —supposing skill to have been, at this moment, of any avail,—that a life so precious should have been intrusted to such ordinary hands. "It was on this day, I think," says Count Gamba, "that, as I was sitting near him, on his sofa, he said to me: 'I was afraid I was losing my memory, and, in order to try, I attempted to repeat some Latin verses with the English translation which I have not endeavoured to recollect since I was at school. I remembered them all except the last word of one of the hexameters.'"

To the faithful Fletcher, the idea of his master's life being in danger seems to have occurred some days before it struck either Count Gamba or the physician. So little, according to his friend's narrative, had such a suspicion crossed Lord Byron's own mind, that he even expressed himself "rather glad of his fever, as it might cure him of his tendency to epilepsy." To Fletcher, however, it appears, he had professed, more than once, strong doubts as to the nature of his complaint being so slight as the physician seemed to suppose it, and on his servant renewing his entreaties that he would send for Dr. Thomas to Zante, made no further opposition; though still, out of consideration for those gentlemen, he referred him on the subject to Dr. Bruno and Mr. Millingen. Whatever might have been the advantage or satisfaction of this step, it was now rendered wholly impossible by the weather,—such a hurricane blowing into the port that not a ship could get out. The rain, too, descended in torrents, and between the floods on the land-side and the sirocco from the sea, Missolonghi was, for the moment, a pestilential prison.

It was at this juncture that Mr. Millingen was, for the first time, according to his own account, invited to attend Lord Byron in his medical capacity,—his visit on the 10th being so little, as he states, professional, that he did not even, on that occasion, feel his Lordship's pulse. The great object for which he was now called in, and rather, it would seem, by Fletcher than Dr. Bruno, was for the

purpose of joining his representations and remonstrances to theirs, and prevailing upon the patient to suffer himself to be bled,—an operation now become absolutely necessary from the increase of the fever, and which Dr. Bruno had, for the last two days, urged in vain.

Holding gentleness to be, with a disposition like that of Byron, the most effectual means of success, Mr. Millingen tried, as he himself tells us, all that reasoning and persuasion could suggest towards attaining his object. But his efforts were fruitless:—Lord Byron, who had now become morbidly irritable, replied angrily, but still with all his accustomed acuteness and spirit, to the physician's observations. Of all his prejudices, he declared, the strongest was that against bleeding. His mother had obtained from him a promise never to consent to being bled; and whatever argument might be produced, his aversion, he said, was stronger than reason. "Besides, is it not," he asked, "asserted by Dr. Reid, in his Essays, that less slaughter is effected by the lance than the lancet—that minute instrument of mighty mischief!" On Mr. Millingen observing that this remark related to the treatment of nervous, but not of inflammatory complaints, he rejoined, in an angry tone, "Who is nervous, if I am not? And do not those other words of his, too, apply to my case, where he says that drawing blood from a nervous patient is like loosening the chords of a musical instrument, whose tones already fail for want of sufficient tension? Even before this illness, you yourself know how weak and irritable I had become;—and bleeding, by increasing this state, will inevitably kill me. Do with me whatever else you like but bleed me you shall not. I have had several inflammatory fevers in my life, and at an age when more robust and plethoric: yet I got through them without bleeding. This time, also, will I take my chance."

After much reasoning and repeated entreaties, Mr. Millingen at length succeeded in obtaining from him a promise, that should he feel his fever increase at night he would allow Dr. Bruno to bleed him.

During this day he had transacted business and received several letters; particularly one that much pleased him from the Turkish Governor, to whom he had sent the rescued prisoners, and who, in this communication, thanked him for his humane interference, and requested a repetition of it.

In the evening he conversed a good deal with Parry, who re-

mained some hours by his bedside. "He sat up in his bed (says this officer), and was then calm and collected. He talked with me on a variety of subjects connected with himself and his family; he spoke of his intentions as to Greece, his plans for the campaign, and what he should ultimately do for that country. He spoke to me about my own adventures. He spoke of death also with great composure; and though he did not believe his end was so very near, there was something about him so serious and so firm, so resigned and composed, so different from any thing I had ever before seen in him, that my mind misgave me, and at times foreboded his speedy dissolution."

On revisiting his patient early next morning, Mr. Millingen learned from him, that having passed, as he thought, on the whole, a better night, he had not considered it necessary to ask Dr. Bruno to bleed him. What followed, I shall, in justice to Mr. Millingen, give in his own words. "I thought it my duty now to put aside all consideration of his feelings, and to declare solemnly to him, how deeply I lamented to see him trifle thus with his life, and show so little resolution. His pertinacious refusal had already, I said, caused most precious time to be lost;—but few hours of hope now remained, and, unless he submitted immediately, to be bled, we could not answer for the consequences. It was true, he cared not for life; but who could assure him that, unless he changed his resolution, the uncontrolled disease might not operate such disorganization in his system as utterly and for ever to deprive him of reason?—I had now hit at last on the sensible chord; and, partly annoyed by our importunities, partly persuaded, he cast at us both the fiercest glance of vexation, and throwing out his arm, said in the angriest tone, 'There,—you are, I see, a d—d set of butchers, take away as much blood as you like, but have done with it.'

"We seized the moment (adds Mr. Millingen), and drew about twenty ounces. On coagulating the blood presented a strong buffy coat; yet the relief obtained did not correspond to the hopes we had formed, and during the night the fever became stronger than it had been hitherto. The restlessness and agitation increased, and the patient spoke several times in an incoherent manner."

On the following morning, the 17th, the bleeding was repeated; for, although the rheumatic symptoms had been completely removed, the appearances of inflammation on the brain were now

hourly increasing. Count Gamba, who had not for the last two days seen him, being confined to his own apartment by a sprained ankle, now contrived to reach his room. "His countenance," says this gentleman, "at once awakened in me the most dreadful suspicions. He was very calm; he talked to me in the kindest manner about my accident, but in a hollow, sepulchral tone. 'Take care of your foot,' said he; 'I know by experience how painful it must be.' I could not stay near his bed: a flood of tears rushed into my eyes, and I was obliged to withdraw." Neither Count Gamba, indeed, nor Fletcher, appear to have been sufficiently masters of themselves to do much else than weep during the remainder of this afflicting scene.

In addition to the bleeding, which was repeated twice on the 17th, it was thought right also to apply blisters to the soles of his feet. "When on the point of putting them on," says Mr. Millingen, "Lord Byron asked me whether it would answer the purpose to apply both on the same leg. Guessing immediately the motive that led him to ask this question, I told him that I would place them above the knees. 'Do so,' he replied."

It is painful to dwell on such details,—but we are now approaching the close. In addition to most of those sad varieties of wretchedness which surround alike the grandest and humblest deathbeds, there was also in the scene now passing around the dying Byron such a degree of confusion and uncomfort as renders it doubly dreary to contemplate. There having been no person invested, since his illness, with authority over the household, neither order nor quiet was maintained in his apartment. Most of the comforts necessary in such an illness were wanting; and those around him, either unprepared for the danger, were, like Bruno, when it came, bewildered by it; or, like the kind-hearted Fletcher and Count Gamba, were by their feelings rendered no less helpless.

"In all the attendants," says Parry, "there was the officiousness of zeal; but, owing to their ignorance of each other's language, their zeal only added to the confusion. This circumstance, and the want of common necessaries, made Lord Byron's apartment such a picture of distress and even anguish during the two or three last days of his life, as I never before beheld, and wish never again to witness."

The 18th being Easter day,—a holiday which the Greeks celebrate by firing off muskets and artillery,—it was apprehended that this

noise might be injurious to Lord Byron; and, as a means of attracting away the crowd from the neighbourhood, the artillery brigade were marched out by Parry, to exercise their guns at some distance from the town; while, at the same time, the town-guard patrolled the streets, and informing the people of the danger of their benefactor, entreated them to preserve all possible quiet.

About three o'clock in the afternoon, Lord Byron rose and went into the adjoining room. He was able to walk across the chamber, leaning on his servant Tita; and, when seated, asked for a book, which the servant brought him. After reading, however, for a few minutes, he found himself faint; and, again taking Tita's arm, tottered into the next room, and returned to bed.

At this time the physicians, becoming still more alarmed, expressed a wish for a consultation; and proposed calling, without delay, Dr. Freiber, the medical assistant of Mr. Millingen, and Luca Vaya, a Greek, the physician of Mavrocordato. On hearing this, Lord Byron at first refused to see them; but being informed that Mavrocordato advised it, he said,—"Very well, let them come; but let them look at me and say nothing." This they promised, and were admitted; but when one of them, on feeling his pulse, showed a wish to speak—"Recollect," he said, "your promise, and go away."

It was after this consultation of the physicians, that, as it appeared to Count Gamba, Lord Byron was, for the first time, aware of his approaching end. Mr. Millingen, Fletcher, and Tita had been standing round his bed; but the two first, unable to restrain their tears, left the room. Tita also wept; but, as Byron held his hand, could not retire. He, however, turned away his face; while Byron, looking at him steadily, said, half smiling, "Oh questa e una bella scena!" [2] He then seemed to reflect a moment, and exclaimed, "Call Parry." Almost immediately afterwards, a fit of delirium ensued; and he began to talk wildly, as if he were mounting a breach in an assault,—calling out, half in English, half in Latin, "Forwards—forwards—courage—follow my example," etc., etc.

On coming again to himself, he asked Fletcher, who had then returned into the room, "whether he had sent for Dr. Thomas, as he desired?" and the servant answering in the affirmative, he replied, "You have done right, for I should like to know what is the matter with me." He had, a short time before, with that kind consideration

[2] "Oh, this is a beautiful scene!"

for those about him which was one of the great sources of their lasting attachment to him, said to Fletcher, "I am afraid you and Tita will be ill with sitting up night and day." It was now evident that he knew he was dying; and between his anxiety to make his servants understand his last wishes, and the rapid failure of his powers of utterance, a most painful scene ensued. On Fletcher asking whether he should bring pen and paper to take down his words—"Oh, no," he replied—"there is no time—it is now nearly over. Go to my sister—tell her—go to Lady Byron—you will see her, and say—" Here his voice faltered, and became gradually indistinct; notwithstanding which he continued still to mutter to himself, for nearly twenty minutes, with much earnestness of manner, but in such a tone that only a few words could be distinguished. These, too, were only names,—"Augusta,"—"Ada,"—"Hobhouse,"—"Kinnaird." He then said, "Now, I have told you all." "My Lord," replied Fletcher, "I have not understood a word your Lordship has been saying." "Not understand me?" exclaimed Lord Byron, with a look of the utmost distress, "what a pity!—then it is too late; all is over."—"I hope not," answered Fletcher; "but the Lord's will be done!"—"Yes, not mine," said Byron. He then tried to utter a few words, of which none were intelligible, except "my sister—my child."

The decision adopted at the consultation had been, contrary to the opinion of Mr. Millingen and Dr. Freiber, to administer to the patient a strong antispasmodic potion, which, while it produced sleep, but hastened perhaps death. In order to persuade him into taking this draught, Mr. Parry was sent for, and, without any difficulty, induced him to swallow a few mouthfuls. "When he took my hand," says Parry, "I found his hands were deadly cold. With the assistance of Tita I endeavoured gently to create a little warmth in them; and also loosened the bandage which was tied round his head. Till this was done he seemed in great pain, clenched his hands at times, gnashed his teeth, and uttered the Italian exclamation of 'Ah Christi!' He bore the loosening of the band passively, and, after it was loosened, shed tears; then taking my hand again, uttered a faint good night, and sunk into a slumber."

In about half an hour he again awoke, when a second dose of the strong infusion was administered to him. "From those about him," says Count Gamba, who was not able to bear this scene himself, "I collected that, either at this time, or in his former interval of reason,

he could be understood to say—'Poor Greece!—poor town!—my poor servants!' Also, 'Why was I not aware of this sooner?' and 'My hour is come!—I do not care for death—but why did I not go home before I came here?' At another time he said, 'There are things which make the world dear to me (Io lascio qualche cosa di caro nel mondo): [3] for the rest, I am content to die.' He spoke also of Greece, saying 'I have given her my time, my means, my health —and now I give her my life!—what could I do more?' "

It was about six o'clock on the evening of this day when he said, "Now I shall go to sleep"; and then turning round fell into that slumber from which he never awoke. For the next twenty-four hours he lay incapable of either sense or motion,—with the exception of, now and then, slight symptoms of suffocation, during which his servant raised his head,—and at a quarter past six o'clock on the following day, the 19th, he was seen to open his eyes and immediately shut them again. The physicians felt his pulse—he was no more!

To attempt to describe how the intelligence of this sad event struck upon all hearts would be as difficult as it is superfluous. He, whom the whole world was to mourn, had on the tears of Greece peculiar claim,—for it was at her feet he now laid down the harvest of such a life of fame. To the people of Missolonghi, who first felt the shock that was soon to spread through all Europe, the event seemed almost incredible. It was but the other day that he had come among them, radiant with renown,—inspiring faith, by his very name, in those miracles of success that were about to spring forth at the touch of his ever-powerful genius. All this had now vanished like a short dream: —and can we wonder that the poor Greeks, to whom his coming had been such a glory, and who, on the last evening of his life, thronged the streets, enquiring as to his state, should regard the thunder-storm which at the moment he died, broke over the town, as a signal of his doom, and, in their superstitious grief, cry to each other, "The great man is gone!"

[3] "I am leaving something dear in the world."

Lockhart's "Life of Scott"

Scott's biographer has come down the years as the man of one book. John Gibson Lockhart (1794–1854) began life as a lawyer but soon turned to literature. The first fruits of his labors were four novels, one of which, *Adam Blair,* attained considerable popularity. In 1825 he moved from Edinburgh to London to become editor of the *Quarterly Review,* a position which he held for the next twenty-eight years. Through his marriage in 1820 to Sophia, the eldest daughter of Sir Walter Scott, he came into intimate relationship with the Scotch novelist and poet, whom he had first met two years before. Laying aside fiction in favor of biography as his field of literary activity outside of his editorial work, Lockhart wrote Lives of Burns and Napoleon. His *Life of Scott,* on which his fame almost entirely rests, was published in 1838. This work is one of the masterpieces of English biography, ranking next to Boswell's *Johnson.*

Walter Scott (1771–1832) is the most representative figure in what is known as the Romantic group of writers who flourished in England and Scotland during the first third of the nineteenth century. From his childhood Scott had been nourished on the legendary lore of Scotch and English balladry, had read widely in medieval and modern history, an astonishing amount of which his extraordinary memory was able to reproduce in song and story. About 1812, when interest in his poetry began to wane before the rising popularity of Byron, Scott turned to prose fiction. Beginning with *Waverley* in 1814, he wrote and published in steady succession the series of romances which brought him fame and fortune. Long eager to own a large estate, he was now able to gratify that wish. He built Abbotsford on the banks of the Tweed, furnished it like a baronial castle, entertained lavishly, and in general lived as the laird of a great manor-house should, until the failure in 1826 of the publishing-house in Edinburgh in which he was a silent partner. The story of Scott's heroic effort to pay a huge debt, of his partial success, and of the eventful discharge of this cheerfully assumed obligation, is too well

known to need elaboration here. One of the following selections from Lockhart's *Life* bears upon this crisis in Sir Walter's career. The last six years of the novelist's life were spent in unremitting labor at the composition of romances, histories, and biographies. Some months of travel for his health in southern Europe, principally in Italy, brought to the tired mind and body a short respite; then the weary knight, homesick for the armorial halls, the retainers, the dogs, the gardens of Abbotsford, and the rippling Tweed, was brought home to die. The last scene, in which he exhorted his son-in-law to be a good man, virtuous, religious, has been often quoted. Sir Walter's body rests in the ruins of Dryburgh Abbey and Lockhart's at his feet. Lockhart wrote the *Life* of his father-in-law at his request. Scott had remarked in a letter to Miss Seward many years before his death: "Biography, the most interesting perhaps of every species of composition, loses all its interest with me, when the shades and lights of the principal character are not accurately and faithfully detailed . . . I can no more sympathize with a mere eulogist than with a ranting hero upon the stage." His own biographer, mindful of this opinion, composed a life-narrative which bears the stamp of truthfulness.

[The standard edition of Lockhart's *Life of Scott,* is the Edinburgh, Cadell, 1839, 9 vols.]

HOSPITALITY AT ABBOTSFORD

On the 12th of May, [1818], as we have seen, Scott left Abbotsford, for the summer session [1] in Edinburgh.

At this moment, his position, take it for all in all, was, I am inclined to believe, what no other man had ever won for himself by the pen alone. His works were the daily food, not only of his countrymen, but of all educated Europe. His society was courted by whatever England could show of eminence. Station, power, wealth, beauty, and genius, strove with each other in every demonstration of respect and worship—and, a few political fanatics and envious poetasters apart, wherever he appeared in town or in country, whoever had Scotch blood in him "gentle or simple" felt it move rapidly through his veins when in the presence of Scott. To descend to what many looked on as higher things, he considered himself, and was considered by all about him, as rapidly consolidating a large fortune:—the annual profits of his novels alone had, for several years, been not less than 10,000 pounds: his domains were daily increased—his castle was rising—and perhaps few doubted that ere long he might receive from the just favour of his Prince some distinction in the way of external rank, such as had seldom before been dreamt of as the possible consequence of a mere literary celebrity. It was about this time that the compiler of these pages first had the opportunity of observing the plain easy modesty which had survived the many temptations of such a career; and the kindness of heart pervading, in all circumstances, his gentle deportment, which made him the rare, perhaps the solitary, example of a man signally elevated from humble beginnings, and loved more and more by his earliest friends and connexions, in proportion as he had fixed on himself the homage of the great, and the wonder of the world.

About the middle of August, [1820], my wife and I went to Abbotsford; and we remained there for several weeks, during which

[1] Scott often attended court in Edinburgh on legal business. He lived while there at 39 Castle Street.

I became familiarized to Sir Walter Scott's mode of existence in the country. It was necessary to observe it, day after day, for a considerable period, before one could believe that such was, during nearly half the year, the routine of life with the most productive author of his age. The humblest person who stayed merely for a short visit, must have departed with the impression, that what he witnessed was an occasional variety; that Scott's courtesy prompted him to break in upon his habits when he had a stranger to amuse; but that it was physically impossible, that the man who was writing the Waverley romances at the rate of nearly twelve volumes in the year, could continue, week after week, and month after month, to devote all but a hardly perceptible fraction of his mornings to out-of-doors occupations, and the whole of his evenings to the entertainment of a constantly varying circle of guests.[2]

The hospitality of his afternoons must alone have been enough to exhaust the energies of almost any man; for his visiters did not mean, like those of country houses in general, to enjoy the landlord's good cheer and amuse each other; but the far greater proportion arrived from a distance, for the sole sake of the Poet and Novelist himself, whose person they had never before seen, and whose voice they might never again have any opportunity of hearing. No other villa in Europe was ever resorted to from the same motives, and to anything like the same extent, except Ferney; and Voltaire never dreamt of being visible to his *hunters,* except for a brief space of the day; few of them even dined with him, and none of them seem to have slept under his roof. Scott's establishment, on the contrary, resembled in every particular that of the affluent idler, who, because he has inherited, or would fain transmit, political influence in some province, keeps open house—receives as many as he has room for, and sees their apartments occupied, as soon as they vacate them by another troop of the same description. Even on gentlemen guiltless of inkshed, the exercise of hospitality upon this sort of scale is found to

[2] One of his visitors about this time expressed surprise that Scott was able to do any literary work at all in the country because of the stream of guests at Abbotsford, remarking: "I know that you contrive to get a few hours in your own room, and that may do for the pen-work; but when is it that you think?" "O," said Scott, "I lie simmering over things for an hour or two before I get up—and there's the time I am dressing to overhaul my half-sleeping half-waking *projet de chapitre*—and when I get the paper before me, it commonly runs off pretty easily. Besides, I often take a doze in the plantations, and while Tom marks out a dyke or a drain as I have directed, one's fancy may be running its ain riggs in some other world."

impose a heavy tax; few of them, nowadays, think of maintaining it for any large portion of the year; very few indeed below the highest rank of the nobility—in whose case there is usually a staff of led-captains, led-chaplains, servile dandies, and semi-professional talkers and jokers from London, to take the chief part of the burden. Now, Scott had often in his mouth the pithy verses—

> "Conversation is but carving,—
> Give no more to every guest,
> Than he's able to digest;
> Give him always of the prime,
> And but a little at a time;
> Carve to all but just enough,
> *And that you may have your due,*
> *Let your neighbours carve for you!*"—

and he, in his own familiar circle always, and in other circles where it was possible, furnished a happy exemplification of these rules and regulations of the Dean of St. Patrick's.[3] But the same sense and benevolence which dictated adhesion to them among his old friends and acquaintance, rendered it necessary to break them, when he was receiving strangers of the class I have described above at Abbotsford: he felt that their coming was the best homage they could pay to his celebrity, and that it would have been as uncourteous in him not to give them their fill of his talk, as it would be in your every-day lord of manors to make his casual guests welcome indeed to his venison, but keep his grouse-shooting for his immediate allies and dependants.

On returning to Abbotsford,[4] we found Mrs. Scott and her daughters doing penance under the merciless curiosity of a couple of tourists who had arrived from Selkirk soon after we set out for Melrose. They were rich specimens—tall, lanky young men, both of them rigged out in new jackets and trousers of the Macgregor tartan; the one, as they had revealed, being a lawyer, the other a Unitarian preacher, from New England. These gentlemen, when told on their arrival that Mr. Scott was not at home, had shown such signs of im-

[3] The Dean of St. Patrick's was Jonathan Swift.
[4] This refers to a visit of Lockhart and his wife in 1818.

patience, that the servant took it for granted they must have serious business, and asked if they would wish to speak a word with his lady. They grasped at this, and so conducted themselves in the interview, that Mrs. Scott never doubted they had brought letters of introduction to her husband, and invited them accordingly to partake of her luncheon. They had been walking about the house and grounds with her and her daughters ever since that time, and appeared at the porch, when the Sheriff [5] and his party returned to dinner, as if they had been already fairly enrolled on his visiting list. For the moment he too was taken in—he fancied that his wife must have received and opened their credentials—and shook hands with them with courteous cordiality. But Mrs. Scott, with all her overflowing good-nature, was a sharp observer; and she, before a minute had elapsed, interrupted the ecstatic compliments of the strangers, by reminding them that her husband would be glad to have the letters of the friends who had been so good as to write by them. It then turned out that there were no letters to be produced;—and Scott, signifying that his hour for dinner approached, added, that as he supposed they meant to walk to Melrose, he could not trespass further on their time. The two lion-hunters seemed quite unprepared for this abrupt escape; but there was about Scott, in perfection, when he chose to exert it, the power of civil repulsion; he bowed the overwhelmed originals to his door, and on re-entering the parlour, found Mrs. Scott complaining very indignantly that they had gone so far as to pull out their note-book, and beg an exact account, not only of his age—but of her own. Scott, already half relenting, laughed heartily at this misery. He observed, however, that, "if he were to take in all the world, he had better put up a sign-post at once—

> 'Porter, ale, and British spirits,
> Painted bright between twa trees;'

and that no traveller of respectability could ever be at a loss for such an introduction as would ensure his best hospitality." Still he was not quite pleased with what had happened—and as we were about to pass, half an hour afterwards, from the drawing-room to

[5] Scott was deputy sheriff of Selkirkshire.

the dining-room, he said to his wife, "Hang the Yahoos, Charlotte—but we should have bid them stay dinner."

It is needless to add, that Sir Walter was familiarly known, long before the days I am speaking of, to almost all the nobility and higher gentry of Scotland; and consequently, that there seldom wanted a fair proportion of them to assist him in doing the honors of his country. It is still more superfluous to say so respecting the heads of his own profession at Edinburgh: *Sibi et amicis*—Abbotsford was their villa whenever they pleased to resort to it, and few of them were ever absent from it long. He lived meanwhile in a constant interchange of easy visits with the gentlemen's families of Teviotdale and the Forest; so that, mixed up with his superfine admirers of the Mayfair breed, his staring worshippers from foreign parts, and his quick-witted coevals of the Parliament-House—there was found generally some hearty homespun laird, with his dame—the young laird—a bashful bumpkin, perhaps, whose ideas did not soar beyond his gun and pointer—or perhaps a little pseudo-dandy, for whom the Kelso race-course and the Jedburgh ball were "Life," and "the World"; and not forgetting a brace of "Miss Rawbones," in whom, as their mamma prognosticated, some of Sir Walter's young Waverleys or Osbaldistones might peradventure discover a Flora MacIvor or a Die Vernon. To complete the *olla podrida,*[6] we must remember that no old acquaintance, or family connexions, however remote their actual station or style of manners from his own, were forgotten or lost sight of. He had some, even near relations, who, except when they visited him, rarely, if ever, found admittance to what the haughty dialect of the upper world is pleased to designate exclusively as *society*. These were welcome guests, let who might be under that roof; and it was the same with many a worthy citizen of Edinburgh, habitually moving in the obscurest of circles, who had been in the same class with Scott at the High School, or his fellow-apprentice when he was proud of earning threepence a page by the use of his pen. To dwell on nothing else, it was surely a beautiful perfection of real universal humanity and politeness, that could enable this great and good man to blend guests so multifarious in one group, and contrive to make them all equally happy with him, with themselves, and with each other.

[6] *Olla podrida* (Sp.), a meat and vegetable stew, meaning here a mixture, or miscellaneous collection.

THE FIRST OF THE "WAVERLEY NOVELS"

"Edinburgh, 9th July, 1814.

"My dear Morritt.[7]

"I owe you many apologies for not sooner answering your very entertaining letter upon your Parisian journey. I heartily wish I had been of your party, for you have seen what I trust will not be seen again in a hurry; since, to enjoy the delight of a restoration, there is a necessity for a previous *bouleversement* of every thing that is valuable in morals and policy, which seems to have been the case in France since 1790. The Duke of Buccleuch told me yesterday of a very good reply of Louis to some of his attendants, who proposed shutting the doors of his apartments to keep out the throng of people. 'Open the door,' he said, 'to John Bull; he has suffered a great deal in keeping the door open for me.'

"Now, to go from one important subject to another, I must account for my own laziness, which I do by referring you to a small anonymous sort of a novel, in three volumes—*Waverley,* which you will receive by the mail of this day. It was a very old attempt of mine to embody some traits of those characters and manners peculiar to Scotland, the last remains of which vanished during my own youth, so that few or no traces now remain. I had written great part of the first volume, and sketched other passages, when I mislaid the MS., and only found it by the merest accident as I was rummaging the drawers of an old cabinet; and I took the fancy of finishing it, which I did so fast, that the last two volumes were finished in three weeks. I had a great deal of fun in the accomplishment of this task, though I do not expect that it will be popular in the south, as much of the humour, if there be any, is local, and some of it even professional. You, however, who are an adopted Scotchman, will find some amusement in it. It has made a very strong impression here, and the good people of Edinburgh are busied in tracing the author, and in finding out originals for the portraits it contains. In the first case, they will probably find it difficult to convict the guilty author although he is far from escaping suspicion. Jeffrey[8] has offered to make oath that it is mine, and another great critic has tendered his affidavit *ex*

[7] The letter was written to his friend J. B. S. Morritt, of Rokeby.
[8] Francis Jeffrey, editor of the *Edinburgh Review,* critic and essayist.

contrario; so that these authorities have divided the Gude Town. However, the thing has succeeded very well, and is thought highly of. I don't know if it has got to London yet. I intend to maintain my *incognito*. Let me know your opinion about it. I should be most happy if I could think it would amuse a painful thought at this anxious moment. I was in hopes Mrs. Morritt was getting so much better that this relapse affects me very much. Ever yours truly,

W. Scott."

This statement of the foregoing letter (repeated still more precisely in a following one), as to the time occupied in the composition of the second and third volumes of *Waverley,* recalls to my memory a trifling anecdote, which, as connected with a dear friend of my youth, whom I have not seen for many years, and may very probably never see again in this world, I shall here set down, in the hope of affording him a momentary, though not an unmixed pleasure, when he may chance to read this compilation on a distant shore—and also in the hope that my humble record may impart to some active mind in the rising generation a shadow of the influence which the reality certainly exerted upon his. Happening to pass through Edinburgh in June 1814, I dined one day with the gentleman in question (now the Honourable William Menzies, one of the Supreme Judges at the Cape of Good Hope), whose residence was then in George Street, situated very near to, and at right angles with, North Castle Street. It was a party of very young persons, most of them, like Menzies and myself, destined for the bar of Scotland, all gay and thoughtless, enjoying the first flush of manhood, with little remembrance of the yesterday or care of the morrow. When my companion's worthy father and uncle, after seeing two or three bottles go round, left the juveniles to themselves, the weather being hot, we adjourned to a library which had one large window looking northwards. After carousing here for an hour or more, I observed that a shade had come over the aspect of my friend, who happened to be placed immediately opposite to myself, and said something that intimated a fear of his being unwell. "No," said he, "I shall be well enough presently, if you will only let me sit where you are, and take my chair; for there is a confounded hand in sight of me here, which has often bothered me before, and now it won't let me fill my glass with a good will." I rose to change places with him accordingly, and he pointed out to

me this hand which, like the writing on Belshazzar's wall, disturbed his hour of hilarity. "Since we sat down," he said, "I have been watching it—it fascinates my eye—it never stops—page after page is finished and thrown on that heap of MS., and still it goes on unwearied—and so it will be till candles are brought in, and God knows how long after that. It is the same every night—I can't stand the sight of it when I am not at my books." "Some stupid, dogged, engrossing clerk, probably," exclaimed myself or some other giddy youth in our society. "No, boys," said our host, "I well know what hand it is—'tis Walter Scott's." This was the hand that, in the evenings of three summer weeks, wrote the two last volumes of *Waverley*.

THE COMPOSITION AND PUBLICATION OF "IVANHOE"

The accounts of Scott's condition circulated in Edinburgh in the course of this April [1819] were so alarming that I should not have thought of accepting his invitation to revisit Abbotsford, unless John Ballantyne had given me better tidings, about the end of the month. He informed me that his "illustrious friend" (for so both the Ballantynes usually spoke of him) was so much recovered as to have resumed his usual literary tasks, though with this difference, that he now, for the first time in his life, found it necessary to employ the hand of another. I have now before me a letter of the 8th April, in which Scott says to Constable, "Yesterday I began to dictate, and did it easily and with comfort. This is a great point—but I must proceed by little and little; last night I had a slight return of the enemy—but baffled him"; and he again writes to the bookseller on the 11th,—"John Ballantyne is here, and returns with copy, which my increasing strength permits me to hope I may now furnish regularly." . . .

His amanuenses were William Laidlaw and John Ballantyne; of whom he preferred the latter, when he could be at Abbotsford, on account of the superior rapidity of his pen; and also because John kept his pen to the paper without interruption, and though with many an arch twinkle in his eyes, and now and then an audible smack of his lips, had resolution to work on like a well-trained clerk; whereas good Laidlaw entered with such keen zest into the interest

of the story as it flowed from the author's lips, that he could not suppress exclamations of surprise and delight—"Gude keep us a'!—the like o' that!—oh sirs! oh sirs!"—and so forth—which did not promote despatch. I have often, however, in the sequel, heard both these secretaries describe the astonishment with which they were equally affected when Scott began this experiment. The affectionate Laidlaw beseeching him to stop dictating, when his audible suffering filled every pause, "Nay, Willie," he answered, "only see that the doors are fast. I would fain keep all the cry as well as all the wool to ourselves; but as to giving over work, that can only be when I am in woollen." John Ballantyne told me that after the first day he always took care to have a dozen of pens made before he seated himself opposite to the sofa on which Scott lay, and that though he often turned himself upon the pillow with a groan of torment, he usually continued the sentence in the same breath. But when dialogue of peculiar animation was in progress, spirit seemed to triumph altogether over matter—he arose from his couch and walked up and down the room, raising and lowering his voice, and as it were acting the parts. It was in this fashion that Scott produced the far greater portion of *The Bride of Lammermoor*—the whole of the *Legend of Montrose*—and almost the whole of *Ivanhoe*. Yet, when his health was fairly re-established, he disdained to avail himself of the power of dictation, which he had thus put to the sharpest test, but resumed, and for many years resolutely adhered to, the old plan of writing every thing with his own hand. When I once, some time afterwards, expressed my surprise that he did not consult his ease, and spare his eyesight at all events, by occasionally dictating, he answered, "I should as soon think of getting into a sedan chair while I can use my legs."

Ivanhoe was received throughout England with a more clamorous delight than any of the Scotch novels had been. The volumes (three in number) were now, for the first time, of the post 8vo form, with a finer paper than hitherto, the press-work much more elegant, and the price accordingly raised from eight shillings the volume to ten; yet the copies sold in this original shape were twelve thousand.

I ought to have mentioned sooner, that the original intention was to bring out *Ivanhoe* as the production of a new hand, and that, to

assist this impression, the work was printed in a size and manner unlike the preceding ones; but Constable, when the day of publication approached, remonstrated against this experiment, and it was accordingly abandoned.

The reader has already been told that Scott dictated the greater part of this romance. The portion of the MS. which is his own, appears, however, not only as well and firmly executed as that of any of the *Tales of My Landlord,* but distinguished by having still fewer erasures and interlineations, and also by being in a smaller hand. The fragment is beautiful to look at—many pages together without one alteration. It is, I suppose, superfluous to add, that in no instance did Scott rewrite his prose before sending it to the press. Whatever may have been the case with his poetry, the world uniformly received the *prima cura*[9] of the novelist.

As a work of art, *Ivanhoe* is perhaps the first of all Scott's efforts, whether in prose or in verse; nor have the strength and splendour of his imagination been displayed to higher advantage than in some of the scenes of this romance. But I believe that no reader who is capable thoroughly of comprehending the author's Scotch characters and Scotch dialogue will ever place even *Ivanhoe,* as a work of genius, on the same level with *Waverley* or the *Heart of Mid-Lothian.*

There is, to me, something so remarkably characteristic of Scott's mind and manner in a particular passage of the Introduction, which he penned ten years afterwards for this work, that I must be pardoned for extracting it here. He says: "The character of the fair Jewess found so much favour in the eyes of some fair readers, that the writer was censured, because, when arranging the fates of the characters of the drama, he had not assigned the hand of Wilfred to Rebecca, rather than the less interesting Rowena. But, not to mention that the prejudices of the age rendered such an union almost impossible, the author may, in passing, observe, that he thinks a character of a highly virtuous and lofty stamp, is degraded rather than exalted by an attempt to reward virtue with temporal prosperity. Such is not the recompense which Providence has deemed worthy of suffering merit; and it is a dangerous and fatal doctrine to teach young persons, the most common readers of romance, that rectitude

[9] The first impression or copy.

of conduct and of principle are either naturally allied with, or adequately rewarded by, the gratification of our passions, or attainment of our wishes. In a word, if a virtuous and self-denied character is dismissed with temporal wealth, greatness, rank, or the indulgence of such a rashly formed or ill assorted passion as that of Rebecca for Ivanhoe, the reader will be apt to say, verily Virtue has had its reward. But a glance on the great picture of life will show, that the duties of self-denial, and the sacrifice of passion to principle, are seldom thus remunerated; and that the internal consciousness of their high-minded discharge of duty, produces on their own reflections a more adequate recompense, in the form of that peace which the world cannot give or take away."

The introduction of the charming Jewess and her father originated, I find, in a conversation that Scott held with his friend Skene during the severest season of his bodily sufferings in the early part of this year. "Mr. Skene," says that gentleman's wife, "sitting by his bedside, and trying to amuse him as well as he could in the intervals of pain, happened to get on the subject of the Jews, as he had observed them when he spent some time in Germany in his youth. Their situation had naturally made a strong impression; for in those days they retained their own dress and manners entire, and were treated with considerable austerity by their Christian neighbours, being still locked up at night in their own quarter by great gates; and Mr. Skene, partly in seriousness but partly from the mere wish to turn his mind at the moment upon something that might occupy and divert it, suggested that a group of Jews would be an interesting feature if he could contrive to bring them into his next novel." Upon the appearance of *Ivanhoe,* he reminded Mr. Skene of this conversation, and said, "You will find this book owes not a little to your German reminiscences." Mrs. Skene adds: "Dining with us one day, not long before *Ivanhoe* was begun, something that was mentioned led him to describe the sudden death of an advocate of his acquaintance, a Mr. Elphinstone, which occurred in the *Outer-house* soon after he was called to the bar. It was, he said, no wonder that it had left a vivid impression on his mind, for it was the first sudden death he ever witnessed; and he now related it so as to make us all feel as if we had the scene passing before our eyes. In the death of the Templar in *Ivanhoe,* I recognized the very picture—I believe I may safely say, the very words."

By the way, before *Ivanhoe* made its appearance, I had myself been formally admitted to the author's secret; but had he favoured me with no such confidence, it would have been impossible for me to doubt that I had been present some months before at the conversation which suggested, and indeed supplied all the materials of, one of its most amusing chapters. I allude to that in which our Saxon terms for animals in the field, and our Norman equivalents for them as they appear on the table, and so on, are explained and commented on. All this Scott owed to the after-dinner talk one day in Castlestreet of his old friend Mr. William Clerk—who, among other elegant pursuits, has cultivated the science of philology very deeply.

I cannot conclude this chapter without observing that the publication of *Ivanhoe* marks the most brilliant epoch in Scott's history as the literary favourite of his contemporaries. With the novel which he next put forth, the immediate sale of these works began gradually to decline; and though even when that had reached its lowest declension, it was still far above the most ambitious dreams of any other novelist, yet the publishers were afraid the announcement of anything like a falling-off might cast a damp over the spirits of the author. He was allowed to remain, for several years, under the impression that whatever novel he threw off commanded at once the old triumphant sale of ten or twelve thousand, and was afterwards, when included in the collective edition, to be circulated in that shape also as widely as *Waverley* or *Ivanhoe*. In my opinion, it would have been very unwise in the booksellers to give Scott any unfavourable tidings upon such subjects after the commencement of the malady which proved fatal to him—for that from the first shook his mind; but I think they took a false measure of the man when they hesitated to tell him exactly how the matter stood, throughout 1820 and the three or four following years, when his intellect was as vigorous as it ever had been, and his heart as courageous; and I regret their scruples (among other reasons), because the years now mentioned were the most costly ones in his life; and for every twelve months in which any man allows himself, or is encouraged by others, to proceed in a course of unwise expenditure, it becomes proportionably more difficult, as well as painful for him to pull up, when the mistake is at length detected or recognised.

BANKRUPTCY

When he returned to Edinburgh from Abbotsford on Monday the 16th of January, [1826], he found (as we have seen) that Hurst and Co. had dishonoured a bill of Constable's; [10] and then proceeded, according to engagement, to dine at Mr. Skene of Rubislaw's. Mr. Skene assures me that he appeared that evening quite in his usual spirits, conversing on whatever topic was started as easily and gaily as if there had been no impending calamity; but at parting, he whispered, "Skene, I have something to speak to you about; be so good as to look in on me as you go to the Parliament-House tomorrow." When Skene called in Castle Street, about half-past nine o'clock next morning, he found Scott writing in his study. He rose, and said, "My friend, give me a shake of your hand—mine is that of a beggar." He then told him that Ballantyne had just been with him, and that his ruin was certain and complete; explaining, briefly, the nature of his connexion with the three houses, whose downfall must that morning be made public. He added, "Don't fancy I am going to stay at home to brood idly on what can't be helped. I was at work upon *Woodstock* when you came in, and I shall take up the pen the moment I get back from Court. I mean to dine with you again on Sunday, and hope then to report progress to some purpose." When Sunday came, he reported accordingly, that, in spite of all the numberless interruptions of meetings and conferences with his partner, the Constables, and men of business—to say nothing of his distressing anxieties on account of his wife and daughter—he had written a chapter of his novel every intervening day.

The reader may be curious to see what account James Ballantyne's memorandum gives of that dark announcement on the morning of Tuesday the 17th. It is as follows:—"On the evening of the 16th, I received from Mr. Cadell a distinct message putting me in possession of the truth. I called immediately in Castle Street, but found Sir Walter had gained an unconscious respite by being engaged out at dinner. It was between eight and nine next morning that I made the final communication. No doubt he was greatly stunned—but, upon the whole, he bore it with wonderful fortitude. He then asked,

[10] The firm of Ballantyne and Constable, printers and publishers, in which Scott was a silent partner, had failed for the large sum mentioned in detail below.

'Well, what is the actual step we must first take—I suppose we must do something?' I reminded him that two or three thousand pounds were due that day, so that we had only to do what we must do—refuse payment—to bring the disclosure sufficiently before the world. He took leave of me with these striking words, 'Well, James, depend upon that, I will never forsake you.'"

"6th February, 1826.

"My dear Lady Davy,[11]

"A very few minutes since I received your kind letter, and answer it in all frankness, and in Iago's words, 'I am *hurt,* ma'am, but not killed'—nor even kilt. I have made so much by literature, that, even should this loss fall in its whole extent, and we now make preparations for the worst, it will not break, and has not broken my sleep. If I have good luck, I may be as rich again as ever; if not, I shall still have far more than many of the most deserving people in Britain—soldiers, sailors, statesmen, or men of literature. . . .

"Lockhart is, I think, in his own line, and therefore I do not regret his absence, though, in our present arrangement, as my wife and Anne propose to remain all the year round at Abbotsford, I shall be solitary enough in my lodgings. But I always loved being a bear and sucking my paws in solitude, better than being a lion and ramping for the amusement of others; and as I propose to slam the door in the face of all and sundry for these three years to come, and neither eat nor give to eat, I shall come forth bearish enough, should I live, to make another avatar. Seriously, I intend to receive nobody, old and intimate friends excepted, at Abbotsford this season, for it cost me much more in time than otherwise.

"I beg my kindest compliments to Sir Humphry, and tell him Ill Luck, that direful chemist, never put into his crucible a more indissoluble piece of stuff than your affectionate cousin and sincere well-wisher,

Walter Scott."

I offer no cold comments on the strength of character which Sir Walter Scott exhibited in the crisis of his calamities. But for the revelations of his Diary it would never have been known to his most intimate friends, or even to his own affectionate children, what

[11] Wife of Sir Humphry Davy, the well-known English chemist.

struggles it cost him to reach the lofty serenity of mind which was reflected in all his outward conduct and demeanour.

As yet, however, he had hardly prepared himself for the extent to which Constable's debts exceeded his assets. The obligations of that house amounted, on a final reckoning, to 256,000 pounds; those of Hurst and Robinson to somewhere about 300,000 pounds. The former paid, ultimately, only 2s. 9d. in the pound; the latter about 1s. 3d.

The firm of James Ballantyne and Co. might have allowed itself to be declared bankrupt, and obtained a speedy discharge, as the book-selling concerns did, for all its obligations;—but that Sir Walter Scott was a partner. Had he chosen to act in the manner commonly adopted by commercial insolvents, the matter would have been settled in a very short time. The creditors of Ballantyne and Co.—(whose claims, including sheafs of bills of all descriptions, amounted to 117,000 pounds)—would have brought into the market whatever property, literary or otherwise, he at the hour of failure possessed; they would have had a right to his life-rent of Abbotsford, among other things—and to his reversionary interest in the estate, in case either his eldest son or his daughter-in-law should die without leaving issue, and thus void the provisions of their marriage-contract. All this being brought into the market, the result would have been a dividend very far superior to what the creditors of Constable and Hurst received; and in return, the partners in the printing firm would have been left at liberty to reap for themselves the profits of their future exertions. Things were, however, complicated in consequence of the transfer of Abbotsford in January, 1825. At first, some creditors seem to have had serious thoughts of contesting the validity of that transaction; but a little reflection and examination satisfied them nothing could be gained by such an attempt. But, on the other hand, Sir Walter felt that he had done wrong in placing any part of his property beyond the reach of his creditors, by entering into that marriage-contract, without a previous most deliberate examination into the state of his responsibilities. He must have felt in this manner, though I have no sort of doubt, that the result of such an examination in January, 1825, if accompanied by an instant calling in of all *counter-bills,* would have been to leave him at perfect liberty to do all that he did upon that occasion. However that may have been, and whatever may have been his delicacy respecting this point, he re-

garded the embarrassments of his commercial firm, on the whole, with the feelings not of a merchant but of a gentleman. He thought that by devoting the rest of his life to the service of his creditors, he could, in the upshot, pay the last farthing he owed them. They (with one or two paltry exceptions) applauded his honourable intentions and resolutions, and partook, to a large extent, in the self-reliance of their debtor. Nor had they miscalculated as to their interest. Nor had Sir Walter calculated wrongly. He paid the penalty of health and life, but he saved his honour and his self-respect:

"The glory dies not, and the grief is past."

On the 8th [of October, 1827], Sir Walter reached Abbotsford, and forthwith resumed his *Grandfather's Tales,* which he composed throughout with the ease and heartiness reflected in this entry:—

"This morning was damp, dripping, and unpleasant; so I even made a work of necessity, and set to the Tales like a dragon. I murdered Maclellan of Bomby at the Thrieve Castle; stabbed the Black Douglas in the town of Stirling; astonished King James before Roxburgh; and stifled the Earl of Mar in his bath, in the Canongate. A wild world, my masters, this Scotland of ours must have been. No fear of want of interest, no lassitude in those days for want of work—

'For treason, dy'e see,
Was to them a dish of tea,
And murder bread and butter.'"

Such was his life in autumn 1827. Before I leave the period, I must note how greatly I admired the manner in which all his dependants appeared to have met the reverse of his fortunes—a reverse which inferred very considerable alteration in the circumstances of every one of them. The butler, instead of being the easy chief of a large establishment, was now doing half the work of the house, at probably half his former wages. Old Peter, who had been for five-and-twenty years a dignified coachman, was now ploughman in ordinary, only putting his horses to the carriage upon high and rare occasions; and so on with all the rest that remained of the ancient train. And all, to my view, seemed happier than they had ever been before. Their good conduct had given every one of them a new elevation in his

own mind—and yet their demeanour had gained, in place of losing, in simple humility of observance. The great loss was that of William Laidlaw, for whom (the estate being all but a fragment in the hands of the trustees and their agent) there was now no occupation here. The cottage, which his taste had converted into a lovable retreat, had found a rent-paying tenant; and he was living a dozen miles off on the farm of a relation in the Vale of Yarrow. Every week, however, he came down to have a ramble with Sir Walter over their old haunts—to hear how the pecuniary atmosphere was darkening or brightening; and to read in every face at Abbotsford, that it could never be itself again until circumstances should permit his re-establishment at Kaeside.

All this warm and respectful solicitude must have had a preciously soothing influence on the mind of Scott, who may be said to have lived upon love. No man cared less about popular admiration and applause; but for the least chill on the affection of any near and dear to him he had the sensitiveness of a maiden. I cannot forget, in particular, how his eyes sparkled when he first pointed out to me Peter Mathieson guiding the plough on the haugh: "Egad," said he, "auld *Pepe* (this was the children's name for their good friend)—auld *Pepe's* whistling at his darg. The honest fellow said, a yoking in a deep field would do baith him and the blackies good. If things get round with me, easy shall be Pepe's cushion." In general, during that autumn, I thought Sir Walter enjoyed much his usual spirits; and often, no doubt, he did so. His Diary shows (what perhaps many of his intimates doubted during his lifetime) that, in spite of the dignified equanimity which characterised all his conversation with mankind, he had his full share of the delicate sensibilities, the mysterious ups and downs, the wayward melancholy, and fantastic sunbeams of the poetical temperament. It is only with imaginative minds, in truth, that sorrows of the spirit are enduring. Those he had encountered were veiled from the eyes of the world, but they lasted with his life. What a picture have we in his entry about the Runic letters he had carved in the day of young passion on the turf among the grave-stones of St. Andrews! And again, he wrote neither sonnets, nor elegies, nor monodies, nor even an epitaph on his wife—but what an epitaph is his Diary throughout the year 1826—ay, and down to the close!

There is one entry of the Diary for the period we are leaving,

which paints the man in his tenderness, his fortitude, and his happy wisdom:—

"September 24.—Worked in the morning as usual, and sent off the proofs and copy. Something of the black dog still hanging about me; but I will shake him off. I generally affect good spirits in company of my family, whether I am enjoying them or not. It is too severe to sadden the harmless mirth of others by suffering your own causeless melancholy to be seen; and this species of exertion is, like virtue, its own reward; for the good spirits, which are at first simulated, become at length real."

Carlyle's "Life of John Sterling"

THE rugged philosopher, Thomas Carlyle (1795–1881), had the most marked individuality of the Victorian essayists and historians. As a boy he walked eighty miles to Edinburgh from the village of Ecclefechan to enter the old University. After his student days he taught school and wrote his first book, *Sartor Resartus,* at Craigenputtoch. In 1834 he moved to London and there spent the rest of his long life. Fame at last came to him with the publication of the *French Revolution* in 1837; numerous other works were produced in steady succession; his books were widely read on the continent and in America, as well as at home; honors, literary friends, the companionship of a brilliant wife, and the reputation of a prophet denouncing shams and preaching the sacredness of work, enriched his distinguished career. Afflicted with dyspepsia, absorbed in work, darkly picturesque in his vocabulary, he impressed his generation as a cynical satirist of the "despicable biped called man." Many of his explosions, however, were merely a grim sort of mirth over human follies, for at heart he was gently humane. Witness, as evidence of this, his letters to his old mother, his many friendships, his interest in young disciples, and his devotion to the memory of his wife. His alleged neglect of her was chiefly self-absorption in his task; genius is hard to live with, and grim Scotch humor may have been misunderstood by outsiders; Jane Welsh probably understood it in her husband; it is certain that she was able to retaliate in caustic wit. Among the friends of them both was John Sterling (1806–1844), preacher, journalist, liberal, founder of a club that finally bore his name, made up of such fine spirits as Carlyle, Mill, Tennyson, and others. After Sterling's early death, the Reverend Julius Hare, whose curate Sterling had been for a short time, edited his *Essays and Tales,* to which he prefixed an account of Sterling's life. This sketch displeased Carlyle, and he felt it his duty to write a biography of his friend. Sterling had fought disease all his life, had dreamed, thought, and struggled, and died in the battle with the demon of ill-health.

His memory, Carlyle felt, must be perpetuated not so much for what he had done—for that was very little—but for what he aspired to do and for the beauty of his spirit. The *Life of Sterling*—a tribute to the "glory of the imperfect"—was written in three months, after Carlyle had re-read Sterling's letters and collected what information he could from his relatives. Froude, Carlyle's biographer, speaks of it as "perhaps the most beautiful biography in the English language. . . . Something of the high purpose which Carlyle assigns to Sterling was perhaps reflected from himself, as with a lover's portrait of his mistress; yet his account of him is essentially as true as it is affectionate." The selection which follows is one of the most famous passages in nineteenth-century literature, the memorable word-portrait of Coleridge as a talker and Sterling's indebtedness to him.

[The standard edition of Carlyle's *Life of Sterling* is the one published by Chapman & Hall, London, and Scribners, New York, 1897]

STERLING AND COLERIDGEAN MOONSHINE

Coleridge sat on the brow of Highgate Hill, in those years, looking down on London and its smoke-tumult, like a sage escaped from the inanity of life's battle; attracting towards him the thoughts of innumerable brave souls still engaged there. His express contributions to poetry, philosophy, or any specific province of human literature or enlightenment, had been small and sadly intermittent; but he had, especially among young inquiring men, a higher than literary, a kind of prophetic or magician character. He was thought to hold, he alone in England, the key of German and other Transcendentalisms; knew the sublime secret of believing by "the reason" what "the understanding" had been obliged to fling out as incredible; and could still, after Hume and Voltaire had done their best and worst with him, profess himself an orthodox Christian, and say and print to the Church of England, with its singular old rubrics and surplices at Allhallowtide, *Esto perpetua.* A sublime man; who, alone in those dark days, had saved his crown of spiritual manhood; escaping from the black materialisms, and revolutionary deluges, with "God, Freedom, Immortality" still his: a king of men. The practical intellects of the world did not much heed him, or carelessly reckoned him a metaphysical dreamer: but to the rising spirits of the young generation he had this dusky sublime character; and sat there as a kind of *Magus,* girt in mystery and enigma; his Dodona oak-grove (Mr. Gilman's house at Highgate) whispering strange things, uncertain whether oracles or jargon.

The Gilmans did not encourage much company, or excitation of any sort, round their sage; nevertheless access to him, if a youth did reverently wish it, was not difficult. He would stroll about the pleasant garden with you, sit in the pleasant rooms of the place,—perhaps take you to his own peculiar room, high up, with a rearward view, which was the chief view of all. A really charming outlook, in fine weather. Close at hand, wide sweep of flowery leafy gardens, their few houses mostly hidden, the very chimney-pots veiled under blossomy umbrage, flowed gloriously down hill, gloriously issuing in

wide-tufted undulating plain-country, rich in all charms of field and town. Waving blooming country of the brightest green; dotted all over with handsome villas, handsome groves; crossed by roads and human traffic, here inaudible or heard only as a musical hum: and behind all swam, under olive-tinted haze, the illimitable limitary ocean of London, with its domes and steeples definite in the sun, big Paul's and the many memories attached to it hanging high over all. Nowhere, of its kind, could you see a grander prospect on a bright summer day, with the set of the air going southward, and so draping with the city-smoke not *you* but the city. Here for hours would Coleridge talk, concerning all conceivable or inconceivable things; and liked nothing better than to have an intelligent, or failing that, even a silent and patient human listener. He distinguished himself to all that ever heard him as at least the most surprising talker extant in this world,—and to some small minority, by no means to all, as the most excellent.

The good man, he was now getting old, towards sixty perhaps; and gave you the idea of a life that had been full of sufferings; a life heavy-laden, half-vanquished, still swimming painfully in seas of manifold physical and other bewilderment. Brow and head were round, and of massive weight, but the face was flabby and irresolute. The deep eyes, of a light hazel, were as full of sorrow as of inspiration; confused pain looked mildly from them, as in a kind of mild astonishment. The whole figure and air, good and amiable otherwise, might be called flabby and irresolute; expressive of weakness under possibility of strength. He hung loosely on his limbs, with knees bent, and stooping attitude; in walking, he rather shuffled than decisively stept; and a lady once remarked, he never could fix which side of the garden walk would suit him best, but continually shifted, in corkscrew fashion, and kept trying both. A heavy-laden, high-aspiring and surely much-suffering man. His voice, naturally soft and good, had contracted itself into a plaintive snuffle and sing-song; he spoke as if preaching,—you would have said, preaching earnestly and also hopelessly the weightiest things. I still recollect his "object" and "subject," terms of continual recurrence in the Kantean province; and how he sang and snuffled them into "om-m-mject" and "sum-m-mject," with a kind of solemn shake or quaver, as he rolled along. No talk, in his century or in any other, could be more surprising.

Sterling, who assiduously attended him, with profound reverence,

and was often with him by himself, for a good many months, gives a record of their first colloquy. Their colloquies were numerous, and he had taken note of many; but they were all gone to the fire, except this first, which Mr. Hare has printed,—unluckily without date. It contains a number of ingenious, true and half-true observations, and is of course a faithful epitome of the things said; but it gives small idea of Coleridge's way of talking;—this one feature is perhaps the most recognisable, "Our interview lasted for three hours, during which he talked two hours and three quarters." Nothing could be more copious than his talk; and furthermore it was always, virtually or literally, of the nature of a monologue; suffering no interruption, however reverent; hastily putting aside all foreign additions, annotations, or most ingenuous desires for elucidation, as well-meant superfluities which would never do. Besides, it was talk not flowing any whither like a river, but spreading every whither in inextricable currents and regurgitations like a lake or sea; terribly deficient in definite goal or aim, nay often in logical intelligibility; *what* you were to believe or do, on any earthly or heavenly thing, obstinately refusing to appear from it. So that, most times, you felt logically lost; swamped near to drowning in this tide of ingenious vocables, spreading out boundless as if to submerge the world.

To sit as a passive bucket and be pumped into, whether you consent or not, can in the long-run be exhilarating to no creature; how eloquent soever the flood of utterance that is descending. But if it be withal a confused unintelligible flood of utterance, threatening to submerge all known landmarks of thought, and drown the world and you!—I have heard Coleridge talk, with eager musical energy, two stricken hours, his face radiant and moist, and communicate no meaning whatsoever to any individual of his hearers,—certain of whom, I for one, still kept eagerly listening in hope; the most had long before given up, and formed (if the room were large enough) secondary humming groups of their own. He began anywhere: you put some question to him, made some suggestive observation: instead of answering this, or decidedly setting out towards answer of it, he would accumulate formidable apparatus, logical swim-bladders, transcendental life-preservers and other precautionary and vehiculatory gear, for setting out; perhaps did at last get under way,—but was swiftly solicited, turned aside by the glance of some radiant new game on this hand or that, into new courses; and ever into new; and

before long into all the Universe, where it was uncertain what game you would catch, or whether any.

His talk, alas, was distinguished, like himself, by irresolution: it disliked to be troubled with conditions, abstinences, definite fulfilments;—loved to wander at its own sweet will, and make its auditor and his claims and humble wishes a mere passive bucket for itself! He had knowledge about many things and topics, much curious reading; but generally all topics led him, after a pass or two, into the high seas of theosophic philosophy, the hazy infinitude of Kantean transcendentalism, with its "sum-m-mjects" and "om-m-mjects." Sad enough; for with such indolent impatience of the claims and ignorances of others, he had not the least talent for explaining this or anything unknown to them; and you swam and fluttered in the mistiest wide unintelligible deluge of things, for most part in a rather profitless uncomfortable manner.

Glorious islets, too, I have seen rise out of the haze; but they were few, and soon swallowed in the general element again. Balmy sunny islets, islets of the blest and the intelligible:—on which occasions those secondary humming groups would all cease humming, and hang breathless upon the eloquent words; till once your islet got wrapt in the mist again, and they would recommence humming. Eloquent artistically expressive words you always had; piercing radiances of a most subtle insight came at intervals; tones of noble pious sympathy, recognisable as pious though strangely coloured, were never wanting long: but in general you could not call this aimless, cloud-capt, cloud-based, lawlessly meandering human discourse of reason by the name of "excellent talk," but only of "surprising"; and were reminded bitterly of Hazlitt's account of it: "Excellent talker, very,—if you let him start from no premises and come to no conclusion." Coleridge was not without what talkers call wit; and there were touches of prickly sarcasm in him, contemptuous enough of the world and its idols and popular dignitaries; he had traits even of poetic humour: but in general he seemed deficient in laughter; or indeed in sympathy for concrete human things either on the sunny or on the stormy side. One right peal of concrete laughter at some convicted flesh-and-blood absurdity, one burst of noble indignation at some injustice or depravity, rubbing elbows with us on this solid Earth, how strange would it have been in that Kantean haze-world, and how infinitely cheering amid its vacant air-castles and dim-melt-

ing ghosts and shadows! None such ever came. His life had been an abstract thinking and dreaming, idealistic, passed amid the ghosts of defunct bodies and of unborn ones. The moaning singsong of that theosophico-metaphysical monotony left on you, at last, a very dreary feeling.

In close colloquy, flowing within narrower banks, I suppose he was more definite and apprehensible; Sterling in aftertimes did not complain of his unintelligibility, or imputed it only to the abstruse high nature of the topics handled. Let us hope so, let us try to believe so! There is no doubt but Coleridge could speak plain words on things plain: his observations and responses on the trivial matters that occurred were as simple as the commonest man's, or were even distinguished by superior simplicity as well as pertinency. "Ah, your tea is too cold, Mr. Coleridge!" mourned the good Mrs. Gilman once, in her kind, reverential and yet protective manner, handing him a very tolerable though belated cup.—"It's better than I deserve!" snuffed he, in a low hoarse murmur, partly courteous, chiefly pious, the tone of which still abides with me: "It's better than I deserve!"

But indeed, to the young ardent mind, instinct with pious nobleness, yet driven to the grim deserts of Radicalism for a faith, his speculations had a charm much more than literary, a charm almost religious and prophetic. The constant gist of his discourse was lamentation over the sunk condition of the world; which he recognised to be given-up to Atheism and Materialism, full of mere sordid misbeliefs, mispursuits and misresults. All Science had become mechanical; the science not of men, but of a kind of human beavers. Churches themselves had died away into a godless mechanical condition; and stood there as mere Cases of Articles, mere Forms of Churches; like the dried carcasses of once-swift camels, which you find left withering in the thirst of the universal desert,—ghastly portents for the present, beneficent ships of the desert no more. Men's souls were blinded, hebetated; and sunk under the influence of Atheism and Materialism, and Hume and Voltaire: the world for the present was as an extinct world, deserted of God, and incapable of welldoing till it changed its heart and spirit. This, expressed I think with less of indignation and with more of long-drawn querulousness, was always recognizable as the ground-tone:—in which truly a pious young heart, driven into Radicalism and the opposition party, could not but recognise a too sorrowful truth; and ask of the Oracle, with all earnestness, What remedy, then?

The remedy, though Coleridge himself professed to see it as in sunbeams, could not, except by processes unspeakably difficult, be described to you at all. On the whole, those dead Churches, this dead English Church especially, must be brought to life again. Why not? It was not dead; the soul of it, in this parched-up body, was tragically asleep only. Atheistic Philosophy was true on its side, and Hume and Voltaire could on their own ground speak irrefragably for themselves against any Church: but lift the Church and them into a higher sphere of argument, *they* died into inanition, the Church revived itself into pristine florid vigour,—became once more a living ship of the desert, and invincibly bore you over stock and stone. But how, but how! By attending to the "reason" of man, said Coleridge, and duly chaining-up the "understanding" of man: the *Vernunft* (Reason) and *Verstand* (Understanding) of the Germans, it all turned upon these, if you could well understand them,—which you couldn't. For the rest, Mr. Coleridge had on the anvil various Books, especially was about to write one grand Book *On the Logos,* which would help to bridge the chasm for us. So much appeared, however: Churches, though proved false (as you had imagined), were still true (as you were to imagine): here was an Artist who could burn you up an old Church, root and branch; and then as the Alchymists professed to do with organic substances in general, distill you an "Astral Spirit" from the ashes, which was the very image of the old burnt article, its airdrawn counterpart,—this you still had, or might get, and draw uses from, if you could. Wait till the Book on the Logos were done;—alas, till your own terrene eyes, blind with conceit and the dust of logic, were purged, subtilised and spiritualised into the sharpness of vision requisite for discerning such an "om-m-m-ject."—The ingenious young English head, of those days, stood strangely puzzled by such revelations; uncertain whether it were getting inspired, or getting infatuated into flat imbecility; and strange effulgence, of new day or else of deeper meteoric night, coloured the horizon of the future for it.

Old Radicalism and mutinous audacious Ethnicism having thus fallen to wreck, and a mere black world of misery and remorse now disclosing itself, whatsoever of natural piety to God and man, whatsoever of pity and reverence, of awe and devout hope was in Sterling's heart now awoke into new activity; and strove for some due

utterance and predominance. His Letters, in these months, speak of earnest religious studies and efforts;—of attempts by prayer and longing endeavour of all kinds, to struggle his way into the temple, if temple there were, and there find sanctuary. The realities were grown so haggard; life a field of black ashes, if there rose no temple anywhere on it! Why, like a fated Orestes, is man so whipt by the Furies, and driven madly hither and thither, if it is not even that he may seek some shrine, and there make expiation and find deliverance?

In these circumstances, what a scope for Coleridge's philosophy, above all! "If the bottled moonshine *be* actually substance? Ah, could one but believe in a Church while finding it incredible! What is faith; what is conviction, credibility, insight? Can a thing be at once known for true, and known for false? 'Reason,' 'understanding': is there, then, such an internecine war between these two? It was so Coleridge imagined it, the wisest of existing men!"—No, it is not an easy matter (according to Sir Kenelm Digby), this of getting-up your "astral spirit" of a thing, and setting it in action, when the thing itself is well burnt to ashes. Poor Sterling; poor sons of Adam in general, in this sad age of cobwebs, worn-out symbolisms, reminiscences and simulacra! Who can tell the struggles of poor Sterling, and his pathless wanderings through these things! Long afterwards, in speech with his brother, he compared his case in this time to that of "a young lady who has tragically lost her lover, and is willing to be half-hoodwinked into a convent, or in any noble or quasi-noble way to escape from a world which has become intolerable."

During the summer of 1832, I find traces of attempts towards Anti-Slavery Philanthropy; shadows of extensive schemes in that direction. Half-desperate outlooks, it is likely, towards the refuge of Philanthropism, as a new chivalry of life. These took no serious hold of so clear an intellect; but they hovered now and afterwards as day-dreams, when life otherwise was shorn of aim;—mirages in the desert, which are found not to be lakes when you put your bucket into them. One thing was clear, the sojourn in St. Vincent [1] was not to last much longer.

Perhaps one might get some scheme raised into life, in Downing

[1] St. Vincent, an island in the British West Indies whither Sterling had gone for his health.

Street, for universal Education to the Blacks, preparatory to emancipating them? There were a noble work for a man! Then again poor Mrs. Sterling's health, contrary to his own, did not agree with warm moist climates. And again, etc., etc. These were the outer surfaces of the measure; the unconscious pretext under which it showed itself to Sterling and was shown by him: but the inner heart and determining cause of it (as frequently in Sterling's life, and in all our lives) was not these. In brief, he had had enough of St. Vincent. The strangling oppressions of his soul were too heavy for him there. Solution lay in Europe, or might lie; not in these remote solitudes of the sea,—where no shrine or saint's well is to be looked for, no communing of pious pilgrims journeying together towards a shrine.

After a residence of perhaps fifteen months Sterling quitted St. Vincent, and never returned. He reappeared at his Father's house, to the joy of English friends, in August 1832; well improved in health, and eager for English news; but, beyond vague schemes and possibilities, considerably uncertain what was next to be done.

After no long stay in this scene,—finding Downing Street dead as stone to the Slave-Education and to all other schemes,—he went across, with his wife and child, to Germany; purposing to make not so much a tour as some loose ramble, or desultory residence in that country, in the Rhineland first of all. Here was to be hoped the picturesque in scenery, which he much affected; here the new and true in speculation, which he inwardly longed for and wanted greatly more; at all events, here as readily as elsewhere might a temporary household be struck up, under interesting circumstances. —I conclude he went across in the Spring of 1833; perhaps directly after *Arthur Coningsby* had got through the press. This Novel, which, as we have said, was begun two or three years ago, probably on his cessation from the *Athenæum,* and was mainly finished, I think, before the removal to St. Vincent, had by this time fallen as good as obsolete to his own mind; and its destination now, whether to the press or to the fire, was in some sort a matter at once of difficulty and of insignificance to him. At length deciding for the milder alternative, he had thrown in some completing touches here and there,—especially, as I conjecture, a proportion of Coleridgean moonshine at the end; and so sent it forth.

It was in the sunny days, perhaps in May or June of this year that *Arthur Coningsby* reached my own hand, far off amid the

healthy wildernesses; sent by John Mill: and I can still recollect the pleasant little episode it made in my solitude there. The general impression it left on me, which has never since been renewed by a second reading in whole or in part, was the certain prefigurement to myself, more or less distinct, of an opulent, genial and sunny mind, but misdirected, disappointed, experienced in misery;—nay, crude and hasty; mistaking for a solid outcome from its woes what was only to be a gilded vacuity. The hero an ardent youth, representing Sterling himself, plunges into life such as we now have it in these anarchic times, with the radical, utilitarian, or mutinous heathen theory, which is the readiest for inquiring souls; finds, by various courses of adventure, utter shipwreck in this; lies broken, very wretched; that is the tragic nodus, or apogee of his life-course. In this mood of mind, he clutches desperately towards some new method (recognisable as Coleridge's) of laying hand again on the old Church, which has hitherto been extraneous and as if non-extant to his way of thought; makes out, by some Coleridgean legerdemain, that there actually is still a Church for him; that this extant Church, which he long took for an extinct shadow, is not such, but a substance; upon which he can anchor himself amid the storms of fate; —and he does so, even taking orders in it, I think. Such could by no means seem to me the true or tenable solution. Here clearly, struggling amid the tumults, was a lovable young fellow-soul; who had by no means yet got to land; but of whom much might be hoped, if he ever did. Some of the delineations are highly pictorial, flooded with a deep ruddy effulgence; betokening much wealth, in the crude or the ripe state. The hope of perhaps, one day, knowing Sterling, was welcome and interesting to me. *Arthur Coningsby,* struggling imperfectly in a sphere high above circulating-library novels, gained no notice whatever in that quarter; gained, I suppose, in a few scattered heads, some such recognition as the above; and there rested. Sterling never mentioned the name of it in my hearing, or would hear it mentioned.

In those very days while *Arthur Coningsby* was getting read amid the Scottish moors, "in June 1833," Sterling, at Bonn in the Rhine-country, fell-in with his old tutor and friend, the Reverend Julius Hare; one with whom he always delighted to communicate, especially on such topics as then altogether occupied him. A man of cheerful serious character, of much approved accomplishment, of

perfect courtesy; surely of much piety, in all senses of that word. Mr. Hare had quitted his scholastic labours and distinctions, some time ago; the call or opportunity for taking orders having come; and as Rector of Herstmonceux in Sussex, a place patrimonially and otherwise endeared to him, was about entering, under the best omens, on a new course of life. He was now on his return from Rome, and a visit of some length to Italy. Such a meeting could not but be welcome and important to Sterling in such a mood. They had much earnest conversation, freely communing on the highest matters; especially of Sterling's purpose to undertake the clerical profession, in which course his reverend friend could not but bid him good speed.

It appears, Sterling already intimated his intention to become a clergyman: He would study theology, biblicalities, perfect himself in the knowledge seemly or essential for his new course—read diligently "for a year or two in some good German University," then seek to obtain orders: that was his plan. To which Mr. Hare gave his hearty *Euge;* adding that if his own curacy happened then to be vacant, he should be well pleased to have Sterling in that office. So they parted.

"A year or two" of serious reflection "in some good German University," or anywhere in the world, might have thrown much elucidation upon these confused strugglings and purposings of Sterling's, and probably have spared him some confusion in his subsequent life. But the talent of waiting was, of all others, the one he wanted most. Impetuous velocity, all-hoping headlong alacrity, what we must call rashness and impatience, characterised him in most of his important and unimportant procedures; from the purpose to the execution there was usually but one big leap with him. A few months after Mr. Hare was gone, Sterling wrote that his purposes were a little changed by the late meeting at Bonn; that he now longed to enter the Church straightway: that if the Herstmonceux Curacy was still vacant, and the Rector's kind thought towards him still held, he would instantly endeavour to qualify himself for that office.

Answer being in the affirmative on both heads, Sterling returned to England; took orders,—"ordained deacon at Chichester on Trinity Sunday in 1834" (he never became technically priest):—and so, having fitted himself and family with a reasonable house, in one of

those leafy lanes in quiet Herstmonceux, on the edge of Pevensey Level, he commenced the duties of his Curacy.

The bereaved young lady has *taken* the veil, then! Even so. "Life is growing all so dark and brutal; must be redeemed into human, if it will continue life. Some pious heroism, to give a human colour to life again, on any terms," even on impossible ones!

To such length can transcendental moonshine, cast by some morbidly radiating Coleridge into the chaos of a fermenting life, act magically there, and produce divulsions and convulsions and diseased developments. So dark and abstruse, without lamp or authentic finger-post, is the course of pious genius towards the Eternal Kingdoms grown. No fixed highway more; the old spiritual highways and recognised paths to the Eternal, now all torn-up and flung in heaps, submerged in unutterable boiling mud-oceans of Hypocrisy and Unbelievability, of brutal living Atheism and damnable dead putrescent Cant; surely a tragic pilgrimage for all mortals; Darkness, and the mere shadow of Death, enveloping all things from pole to pole; and in the raging gulf-currents, offering us will-o'-wisps for load-stars,—intimating that there are no stars, nor ever were, except certain Old-Jew ones which have now gone out. Once more, a tragic pilgrimage for all mortals; and for the young pious soul, winged with genius, and passionately seeking land, and passionately abhorrent of floating carrion withal, more tragical than for any!—A pilgrimage we must all undertake nevertheless, and make the best of with our respective means. Some arrive; a glorious few: many must be lost,—go down upon the floating wreck which they took for land. Nay, courage! These also, so far as there was any heroism in them, have bequeathed their life as a contribution to us, have valiantly laid their bodies in the chasm for us: of these also there is no ray of heroism *lost,*—and, on the whole, what else of them could or should be "saved" at any time? Courage, and ever Forward!

Concerning this attempt of Sterling's to find sanctuary in the old Church, and desperately grasp the hem of her garment in such manner, there will at present be many opinions: and mine must be recorded here in flat reproval of it, in mere pitying condemnation of it, as a rash, false, unwise and unpermitted step. Nay, among the evil lessons of his Time to poor Sterling, I cannot but account this

the worst; properly indeed, as we may say, the apotheosis, the solemn apology and consecration, of all the evil lessons that were in it to him. Alas, if we did remember the divine and awful nature of God's Truth, and had not so forgotten it as poor doomed creatures never did before,—should we, durst we in our most audacious moments, think of wedding *it* to the world's Untruth, which is also, like all untruths, the Devil's? Only in the world's last lethargy can such things be done, and accounted safe and pious! Fools! "Do you think the Living God is a buzzard idol," sternly asks Milton, that you dare address Him in this manner?—Such darkness, thick sluggish clouds of cowardice and oblivious baseness, have accumulated on us: thickening as if towards the eternal sleep! It is not now known, what never needed proof or statement before, that Religion is not a doubt; that it is a certainty,—or else a mockery and horror. That none or all of the many things we are in doubt about, and need to have demonstrated and rendered probable, can by any alchymy be made a "Religion" for us; but are and must continue a baleful, quiet or unquiet, Hypocrisy for us; and bring—*salvation,* do we fancy? I think, it is another thing they will bring, and are, on all hands, visibly bringing, this good while!—

The time, then, with its deliriums, has done its worst for poor Sterling. Into deeper aberration it cannot lead him; this is the crowning error. Happily, as beseems the superlative of errors, it was a very brief, almost a momentary one. In June 1834 Sterling dates as installed at Herstmonceux; and is flinging, as usual, his whole soul into the business; successfully so far as outward results could show: but already in September, he begins to have misgivings; and in February following, quits it altogether,—the rest of his life being, in great part, a laborious effort of detail to pick the fragments of it off him, and be free of it in soul as well as in title.

At this the extreme point of spiritual deflexion and depression, when the world's madness, unusually impressive on such a man, has done its very worst with him, and in all future errors whatsoever he will be a little less mistaken, we may close the First Part of Sterling's Life.

Mrs. Gaskell's "Life of Charlotte Brontë"

The life of Elizabeth Cleghorn Gaskell (1810–1865) was spent at the village of Knutsford, Cheshire, and in Manchester after her marriage to Rev. William Gaskell. The first of her dozen stories was *Mary Barton* (1848), a social novel reflecting scenes of working-life around her in Manchester, which soon made her known to Ruskin, Dickens, and other literary men of the day. Her greatest novel, *Cranford* (1853), by which her name is familiar to modern readers, is a story of gossipy spinsters and widows in the peaceful village of Knutsford where she spent her girlhood. Mrs. Gaskell had become acquainted with Charlotte Brontë after the publication of *Ruth Barton,* visited the Brontë home at Haworth in Yorkshire, and formed a friendship with her sister novelist. Charlotte Brontë (1816–1855) and her two gifted sisters, Emily and Anne, living with their widowed father, an austere clergyman, in the bleak Northern village, had turned to writing poetry and fiction as a relief from exacting and monotonous household duties. Of Charlotte's four novels, written amid tragic domestic afflictions, *Jane Eyre* (1847) brought the author wide renown for its dramatic realism and sincere emotion. Among a large circle of literary admirers Charlotte Brontë found a warm sympathizer and admirer in Mrs. Gaskell. It was natural, therefore, that the Manchester novelist should be moved to write the Life of the lonely story-teller of Haworth. The *Life of Charlotte Brontë* came out in 1857, was praised and censured. Mrs. Gaskell, a novelist, had used her imagination too freely as a biographer: she is blameworthy, no doubt, for exaggerating the somberness of the parsonage and the delinquencies of the son of the manse; but when all just deductions have been made, there is left the essentially faithful portraiture of Charlotte Brontë which has given Mrs. Gaskell's *Life* a permanent place among a score of entertaining English biographies. Despite certain faults of structure, it has a style of such genuineness and warmth as to commend it to

lovers of literary art. The passages reproduced below give the impression of direct personal knowledge on the part of the life-writer.

[The standard edition, reprinted from the first, is Scott & Willett's, London, 1901. The Everyman Edition, with Miss Sinclair's introduction, is the most available.]

LIFE AND LITERARY LABOR AT HAWORTH

All this time, notwithstanding the domestic anxieties which were harassing them—notwithstanding the ill-success of their poems—the three sisters were trying that other literary venture, to which Charlotte made allusion in one of her letters to the Messrs. Aylott. Each of them had written a prose tale, hoping that the three might be published together. *Wuthering Heights* and *Agnes Grey* are before the world. The third—Charlotte's contribution—is yet in manuscript, but will be published shortly after the appearance of this memoir. The plot in itself is of no great interest; but it is a poor kind of interest that depends upon startling incidents rather than upon dramatic development of character; and Charlotte Brontë never excelled one or two sketches of portraits which she has given in *The Professor,* nor, in grace of womanhood, ever surpassed one of the female characters there described. By the time she wrote this tale, her taste and judgment had revolted against the exaggerated idealisms of her early girlhood, and she went to the extreme of reality, closely depicting characters as they had shown themselves to her in actual life: if there they were strong even to coarseness,—as was the case with some that she had met with in flesh and blood existence,—she "wrote them down an ass"; if the scenery of such life as she saw was for the most part wild and grotesque, instead of pleasant or picturesque, she described it line for line. The grace of the one or two scenes and characters, which are drawn rather from her own imagination than from absolute fact, stands out in exquisite relief from the deep shadows and wayward lines of others, which call to mind some of the portraits of Rembrandt.

The three tales had tried their fate in vain together; at length they were sent forth separately, and for many months with still-continued ill success. I have mentioned this here, because, among the dispiriting circumstances connected with her anxious visit to Manchester, Charlotte told me that her tale came back upon her hands, curtly rejected by some publisher, on the very day when her father was to submit to his operation. But she had the heart of Robert Bruce within her,

and failure upon failure daunted her no more than him. Not only did *The Professor* return again to try his chance among the London publishers, but she began, in this time of care and depressing inquietude,—in those grey, weary, uniform streets, where all faces, save that of her kind doctor, were strange and untouched with sunlight to her,—there and then, did the brave genius begin *Jane Eyre*. Read what she herself says:—"Currer Bell's [1] book found acceptance nowhere, nor any acknowledgment of merit, so that something like the chill of despair began to invade his heart." And, remember, it was not the heart of a person who, disappointed in one hope, can turn with redoubled affection to the many certain blessings that remain. Think of her home, and the black shadow of remorse lying over one [2] in it, till his very brain was mazed, and his gifts and his life were lost;—think of her father's sight hanging on a thread;—of her sister's delicate health, and dependence on her care;—and then admire as it deserves to be admired, the steady courage which could work away at *Jane Eyre,* all the time "that the one-volume tale was plodding its weary round in London."

I believe I have already mentioned that some of her surviving friends consider that an incident which she heard, when at school at Miss Wooler's, was the germ of the story of Jane Eyre. But of this nothing can be known, except by conjecture. Those to whom she spoke upon the subject of her writings are dead and silent; and the reader may probably have noticed, that in the correspondence from which I have quoted, there has been no allusion whatever to the publication of her poems, nor is there the least hint of the intention of the sisters to publish any tales. I remember, however, many little particulars which Miss Brontë gave me, in answer to my inquiries respecting her mode of composition, etc. She said, that it was not every day that she could write. Sometimes weeks or even months elapsed before she felt that she had anything to add to that portion of her story which was already written. Then, some morning, she would waken up, and the progress of her tale lay clear and bright before her, in distinct vision. When this was the case, all her care was to discharge her household and filial duties, so as to obtain leisure to sit down and write out the incidents and consequent

[1] Currer Bell, assumed to be masculine, was the pen-name of Charlotte Brontë.
[2] Reference to Branwell Brontë, Charlotte's gifted brother, whose weaknesses saddened the family life.

thoughts, which were, in fact, more present to her mind at such times than her actual life itself. Yet notwithstanding this "possession" (as it were), those who survive, of her daily and household companions, are clear in their testimony, that never was the claim of any duty, never was the call of another for help, neglected for an instant. It had become necessary to give Tabby—now nearly eighty years of age—the assistance of a girl. Tabby relinquished any of her work with jealous reluctance, and could not bear to be reminded, though ever so delicately, that the acuteness of her senses was dulled by age. The other servant might not interfere with what she chose to consider her exclusive work. Among other things, she reserved to herself the right of peeling the potatoes for dinner; but as she was growing blind, she often left in those black specks, which we in the North call the "eyes" of the potato. Miss Brontë was too dainty a housekeeper to put up with this; yet she could not bear to hurt the faithful old servant, by bidding the younger maiden go over the potatoes again, and so reminding Tabby that her work was less effectual than formerly. Accordingly she would steal into the kitchen, and quietly carry off the bowl of vegetables, without Tabby's being aware, and breaking off in the full flow of interest and inspiration in her writing, carefully cut out the specks in the potatoes, and noiselessly carry them back to their place. This little proceeding may show how orderly and fully she accomplished her duties, even at those times when "the possession" was upon her.

Any one who has studied her writings—whether in print or in her letters; any one who has enjoyed the rare privilege of listening to her talk, must have noticed her singular felicity in the choice of words. She herself, in writing books, was solicitous on this point. One set of words was the truthful mirror of her thoughts; no others, however apparently identical in meaning, would do. She had that strong practical regard for the simple holy truth of expression, which Mr. Trench has enforced, as a duty too often neglected. She would wait patiently searching for the right term, until it presented itself to her. It might be provincial, it might be derived from the Latin; so that it accurately represented her idea, she did not mind whence it came; but this care makes her style present the finish of a piece of mosaic. Each component part, however small, has been dropped into the right place. She never wrote down a sentence until she clearly understood what she wanted to say, had deliberately chosen

the words, and arranged them in their right order. Hence it comes that, in the scraps of paper covered with her pencil writing which I have seen, there will occasionally be a sentence scored out, but seldom, if ever, a word or an expression. She wrote on these bits of paper in a minute hand, holding each against a piece of board, such as is used in binding books, for a desk. This plan was necessary for one so short-sighted as she was; and, besides, it enabled her to use pencil and paper, as she sat near the fire in the twilight hours, or if (as was too often the case) she was wakeful for hours in the night. Her finished manuscripts were copied from these pencil scraps, in clear, legible, delicate traced writing, almost as easy to read as print.

The sisters retained the old habit, which was begun in their aunt's lifetime, of putting away their work at nine o'clock, and beginning their study, pacing up and down the sitting room. At this time, they talked over the stories they were engaged upon, and described their plots. Once or twice a week, each read to the others what she had written, and heard what they had to say about it. Charlotte told me, that the remarks made had seldom any effect in inducing her to alter her work, so possessed was she with the feeling that she had described reality; but the readings were of great and stirring interest to all, taking them out of the gnawing pressure of daily-recurring cares, and setting them in a free place. It was on one of these occasions, that Charlotte determined to make her heroine plain, small, and unattractive, in defiance of the accepted canon.

The writer of the beautiful obituary article on "the death of Currer Bell" most likely learnt from herself what is there stated, and which I will take the liberty of quoting, about Jane Eyre.

"She once told her sisters that they were wrong—even morally wrong—in making their heroines beautiful as a matter of course. They replied that it was impossible to make a heroine interesting on any other terms. Her answer was, 'I will prove to you that you are wrong; I will show you a heroine as plain and as small as myself, who shall be as interesting as any of yours.' Hence *Jane Eyre,* said she in telling the anecdote: 'but she is not myself, any further than that.' As the work went on, the interest deepened to the writer. When she came to 'Thornfield' she could not stop. Being short-sighted to excess, she wrote in little square paper-books, held close to her eyes, and (the first copy) in pencil. On she went, writing in-

cessantly for three weeks; by which time she had carried her heroine away from Thornfield, and was herself in a fever which compelled her to pause."

This is all, I believe, which can now be told respecting the conception and composition of this wonderful book.

The reader may remember the strange prophetic vision, which dictated a few words, written on the occasion of the death of a pupil of hers in January, 1840:

"Wherever I seek for her now in this world, she cannot be found; no more than a flower or a leaf which withered twenty years ago. A bereavement of this kind gives one a glimpse of the feeling those must have, who have seen all drop round them—friend after friend, and are left to end their pilgrimage alone."

Even in persons of naturally robust health, and with no

"Ricordarsi di tempo felice
Nella miseria—" [3]

to wear, with slow dropping but perpetual pain, upon their spirits, the nerves and appetite will give way in solitude. How much more must it have been so with Miss Brontë, delicate and frail in constitution, tried by much anxiety and sorrow in early life, and now left to face her life alone! [4] Owing to Mr. Brontë's great age, and long-formed habits of solitary occupation when in the house, his daughter was left to herself for the greater part of the day. Ever since his serious attacks of illness, he had dined alone; a portion of her dinner, regulated by strict attention to the diet most suitable for him, being taken into his room by herself. After dinner she read to him for an hour or so, as his sight was too weak to allow of his reading long to himself. He was out of doors among his parishioners for a good part of each day; often for a longer time than his strength would permit. Yet he always liked to go alone, and consequently her affectionate care could be no check upon the length of his walks to the more distant hamlets which were in his cure. He would come back

[3] There is no greater grief
Than in misery to recall happier days.
—Dante's *Inferno*, Canto V.

[4] Charlotte Brontë's two sisters, Emily and Anne, both novelists, were now dead.

occasionally utterly fatigued; and be obliged to go to bed, questioning himself sadly as to where all his former strength of body had gone to. His strength of will was the same as ever. That which he resolved to do he did, at whatever cost of weariness; but his daughter was all the more anxious from seeing him so regardless of himself and his health. The hours of retiring for the night had always been early in the Parsonage; now family prayers were at eight o'clock; directly after which Mr. Brontë and old Tabby went to bed, and Martha was not long in following. But Charlotte could not have slept if she had gone,—could not have rested on her desolate couch. She stopped up,—it was very tempting,—late and later; striving to beguile the lonely night with some employment, till her weak eyes failed to read or to sew, and could only weep in solitude over the dead that were not. No one on earth can even imagine what those hours were to her. All the grim superstitions of the North had been implanted in her during her childhood by the servants, who believed in them. They recurred to her now,—with no shrinking from the spirits of the Dead, but with such an intense longing once more to stand face to face with the souls of her sisters, as no one but she could have felt. It seemed as if the very strength of her yearning should have compelled them to appear. On windy nights, cries, and sobs, and wailings seemed to go round the house, as of the dearly-beloved striving to force their way to her. Some one conversing with her once objected, in my presence, to that part of *Jane Eyre* in which she hears Rochester's voice crying out to her in a great crisis of her life, he being many, many miles distant at the time. I do not know what incident was in Miss Brontë's recollection when she replied, in a low voice, drawing in her breath, "But it is a true thing; it really happened."

The reader, who has even faintly pictured to himself her life at this time,—the solitary days,—the waking, watching nights,—may imagine to what a sensitive pitch her nerves were strung, and how such a state was sure to affect her health.

It was no bad thing for her that about this time various people began to go over to Haworth, curious to see the scenery described in *Shirley*, if a sympathy with the writer, of a more generous kind than to be called mere curiosity, did not make them wish to know whether they could not in some way serve or cheer one who had suffered so deeply.

Among this number were Sir James and Lady Kay Shuttleworth. Their house lies over the crest of the moors which rise above Haworth, at about a dozen miles' distance as the crow flies, though much further by the road. But, according to the acceptation of the word in that uninhabited district, they were neighbours if they so willed it. Accordingly, Sir James and his wife drove over one morning, at the beginning of March, to call upon Miss Brontë and her father. Before taking leave, they pressed her to visit them at Gawthorpe Hall, their residence on the borders of East Lancashire. After some hesitation, and at the urgency of her father, who was extremely anxious to procure for her any change of scene and society that was offered, she consented to go. On the whole, she enjoyed her visit very much, in spite of her shyness, and the difficulty she always experienced in meeting the advances of those strangers whose kindness she did not feel herself in a position to repay.

She took great pleasure in the "quiet drives to old ruins and old halls, situated among older hills and woods; the dialogues by the old fireside in the antique oak-panneled drawing-room, while they suited him, did not too much oppress and exhaust me. The house, too, is much to my taste; near three centuries old, grey, stately, and picturesque. On the whole, now that the visit is over, I do not regret having paid it. The worst of it is, that there is now some menace hanging over my head of an invitation to go to them in London during the season. This, which would be a great enjoyment to some people, is a perfect terror to me. I should highly prize the advantages to be gained in an extended range of observation; but I tremble at the thought of the price I must necessarily pay in mental distress and physical wear and tear."

On the same day on which she wrote the above, she sent the following letter to Mr. Smith.

"March 16th, 1850.

"I return Mr. H——'s note, after reading it carefully. I tried very hard to understand all he says about art; but, to speak truth, my efforts were crowned with incomplete success. There is a certain jargon in use amongst critics on this point through which it is physically and morally impossible to me to see daylight. One thing, however, I see plainly enough, and that is, Mr. Currer Bell needs improvement, and ought to strive after it; and this (D. V.) he

honestly intends to do—taking his time, however, and following as his guides Nature and Truth. If these lead to what the critics call art, it is all very well; but if not, that grand desideratum has no chance of being run after or caught. The puzzle is, that while the people of the South object to my delineation of Northern life and manners, the people of Yorkshire and Lancashire approve. They say it is precisely the contrast of rough nature with highly artificial cultivation which forms one of their main characteristics. Such, or something very similar, has been the observation made to me lately, whilst I have been from home, by members of some of the ancient East Lancashire families, whose mansions lie on the hilly borderland between the two counties. The question arises, whether do the London critics, or the old Northern squires, understand the matter best?

"Any promise you require respecting the books shall be willingly given, provided only I am allowed the Jesuit's principle of a mental reservation, giving licence to forget any promise whenever oblivion shall appear expedient. The last two or three numbers of *Pendennis* will not, I dare say, be generally thought sufficiently exciting, yet I like them. Though the story lingers, (for me) the interest does not flag. Here and there we feel that the pen has been guided by a tired hand, that the mind of the writer has been somewhat chafed and depressed by his recent illness, or by some other cause; but Thackeray still proves himself greater when he is weary than other writers are when they are fresh. The public, of course, will have no compassion for his fatigue, and make no allowance for the ebb of inspiration; but some true-hearted readers here and there, while grieving that such a man should be obliged to write when he is not in the mood, will wonder that, under such circumstances, he should write so well. The parcel of books will come, I doubt not, at such time as it shall suit the good pleasure of the railway officials to send it on,—or rather to yield it up to the repeated and humble solicitations of Haworth carriers;—till when I wait in all reasonable patience and resignation, looking with docility to that model of active self-helpfulness *Punch* friendly offers the 'Women of England,' in his 'Unprotected Female.'"

The books lent her by her publishers were, as I have before said, a great solace and pleasure to her. There was much interest in opening the Cornhill parcel. But there was pain too; for, as she untied the cords, and took out the volumes one by one, she could scarcely

fail to be reminded of those who once, on similar occasions, looked on so eagerly. "I miss familiar voices, commenting mirthfully and pleasantly; the room seems very still—very empty; but yet there is consolation in remembering that Papa will take pleasure in some of the books. Happiness quite unshared can scarcely be called happiness; it has no taste."

Towards the latter end of September [1853] I went to Haworth. At the risk of repeating something which I have previously said, I will copy out parts of a letter which I wrote at the time.

"It was a dull, drizzly Indian-inky day, all the way on the railroad to Keighley, which is a rising wool-manufacturing town, lying in a hollow between hills—not a pretty hollow, but more what the Yorkshire people call a 'bottom,' or 'botham.' I left Keighley in a car for Haworth, four miles off—four tough, steep, scrambling miles, the road winding between the wave-like hills that rose and fell on every side of the horizon, with a long illimitable sinuous look, as if they were a part of the line of the Great Serpent, which the Norse legend says girdles the world. The day was lead-coloured; the road had stone factories alongside of it,—grey, dull-coloured rows of stone cottages belonging to these factories, and then we came to poor, hungry-looking fields;—stone fences everywhere, and trees nowhere. Haworth is a long, straggling village: one steep narrow street—so steep that the flag-stones with which it is paved are placed end-ways, that the horses' feet may have something to cling to, and not slip down backwards; which if they did, they would soon reach Keighley. But if the horses had cats' feet and claws, they would do all the better. Well, we (the man, horse, car, and I) clambered up this street, and reached the church dedicated to St. Autest (who was he?); then we turned off into a lane on the left, past the curate's lodging at the Sexton's, past the school-house, up to the Parsonage yard-door. I went round the house to the front door, looking to the church;—moors everywhere beyond and above. The crowded grave-yard surrounds the house and small grass enclosure for drying clothes.

"I don't know that I ever saw a spot more exquisitely clean; the most dainty place for that I ever saw. To be sure, the life is like clock-work. No one comes to the house; nothing disturbs the deep

repose; hardly a voice is heard; you catch the ticking of the clock in the kitchen, or the buzzing of a fly in the parlour, all over the house. Miss Brontë sits alone in her parlour; breakfasting with her father in his study at nine o'clock. She helps in the housework; for one of their servants, Tabby, is nearly ninety, and the other only a girl. Then I accompanied her in her walks on the sweeping moors: the heather-bloom had been blighted by a thunder-storm a day or two before, and was all of a livid brown colour, instead of the blaze of purple glory it ought to have been. Oh! those high, wild, desolate moors, up above the whole world, and the very realms of silence! Home to dinner at two. Mr. Brontë has his dinner sent into him. All the small table arrangements had the same dainty simplicity about them. Then we rested, and talked over the clear, bright fire; it is a cold country, and the fires were a pretty warm dancing light all over the house. The parlour had been evidently refurnished within the last few years, since Miss Brontë's success has enabled her to have a little more money to spend. Everything fits into, and is in harmony with, the idea of a country parsonage, possessed by people of very moderate means. The prevailing colour of the room is crimson, to make a warm setting for the cold grey landscape without. There is her likeness by Richmond, and an engraving from Lawrence's picture of Thackeray; and two recesses, on each side of the high, narrow, old-fashioned mantel-piece, filled with books,—books given to her, books she has bought, and which tell of her individual pursuits and tastes; *not* standard books.

"She cannot see well, and does little beside knitting. The way she weakened her eyesight was this: When she was sixteen or seventeen, she wanted much to draw; and she copied nimini-pimini copper-plate engravings out of annuals, ('stippling,' don't the artists call it?) every little point put in, till at the end of six months she had produced an exquisitely faithful copy of the engraving. She wanted to learn to express her ideas by drawing. After she had tried to *draw* stories, and not succeeded, she took the better mode of writing; but in so small a hand, that it is almost impossible to decipher what she wrote at this time.

"But now to return to our quiet hour of rest after dinner. I soon observed that her habits of order were such that she could not go on with the conversation, if a chair was out of its place; everything was arranged with delicate regularity. We talked over the old times of

her childhood; of her elder sister's (Maria's) death,—just like that of Helen Burns in *Jane Eyre;* of those strange, starved days at school; of the desire (almost amounting to illness) of expressing herself in some way,—writing or drawing; of her weakened eyesight, which prevented her doing anything for two years, from the age of seventeen to nineteen; of her being a governess; of her going to Brussels; whereupon I said I disliked Lucy Snowe, and we discussed M. Paul Emanuel; and I told her of ——'s admiration of *Shirley,* which pleased her, for the character of Shirley was meant for her sister Emily, about whom she is never tired of talking, nor I of listening. Emily must have been a remnant of the Titans,—great-granddaughter of the giants who used to inhabit earth. One day, Miss Brontë brought down a rough, common-looking oil-painting, done by her brother, of herself,—a little, rather prim-looking girl of eighteen,—and the two other sisters, girls of sixteen and fourteen, with cropped hair, and sad, dreamy-looking eyes . . . Emily had a great dog,—half mastiff, half bull-dog—so savage, etc. . . . This dog went to her funeral, walking side by side with her father; and then, to the day of its death, it slept at her room door, snuffing under it, and whining every morning.

"We have generally had another walk before tea, which is at six; at half-past eight, prayers; and by nine, all the household are in bed, except ourselves. We sit up together till ten, or past; and after I go, I hear Miss Brontë come down and walk up and down the room for an hour or so."

Copying this letter has brought the days of that pleasant visit very clear before me—very sad in their clearness. We were so happy together; we were so full of interest in each other's subjects. The day seemed only too short for what we had to say and to hear. I understood her life the better for seeing the place where it had been spent—where she had loved and suffered. Mr. Brontë was a most courteous host; and when he was with us,—at breakfast in his study, or at tea in Charlotte's parlour,—he had a sort of grand and stately way of describing past times, which tallied well with his striking appearance. He never seemed quite to have lost the feeling that Charlotte was a child to be guided and ruled, when she was present; and she herself submitted to this with a quiet docility that half amused, half astonished me. But when she had to leave the room, then all his pride

in her genius and fame came out. He eagerly listened to everything I could tell him of the high admiration I had at any time heard expressed for her works. He would ask for certain speeches over and over again, as if he desired to impress them on his memory.

I remember two or three subjects of the conversations which she and I held in the evenings, besides those alluded to in my letter.

I asked her whether she had ever taken opium, as the description given of its effects in *Villette* was so exactly like what I had experienced,—vivid and exaggerated presence of objects, of which the outlines were indistinct, or lost in golden mist, etc. She replied, that she had never, to her knowledge, taken a grain of it in any shape, but that she had followed the process she always adopted when she had to describe anything which had not fallen within her own experience; she had thought intently on it for many and many a night before falling to sleep,—wondering what it was like, or how it would be,—till at length, sometimes after the progress of her story had been arrested at this one point for weeks, she wakened up in the morning with all clear before her, as if she had in reality gone through the experience, and then could describe it, word for word, as it had happened. I cannot account for this psychologically; I only am sure that it was so, because she said it.

She made many inquiries as to Mrs. Stowe's personal appearance; and it evidently harmonized well with some theory of hers, to hear that the author of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* was small and slight. It was another theory of hers, that no mixtures of blood produced such fine characters, mentally and morally, as the Scottish and English.

I recollect, too, her saying how acutely she dreaded a charge of plagiarism, when, after she had written *Jane Eyre,* she read the thrilling effect of the mysterious scream at midnight in Mrs. Marsh's story of the *Deformed.* She also said that, when she read the *Neighbours,* she thought every one would fancy that she must have taken her conception of Jane Eyre's character from that of "Francesca," the narrator of Miss Bremer's story. For my own part, I cannot see the slightest resemblance between the two characters, and so I told her; but she persisted in saying that Francesca was Jane Eyre married to a good-natured "Bear" of a Swedish surgeon.

We went, not purposely, but accidentally, to see various poor people in our distant walks. From one we had borrowed an umbrella; in the house of another we had taken shelter from a rough Sep-

tember storm. In all these cottages, her quiet presence was known. At three miles from her home, the chair was dusted for her, with a kindly "Sit ye down, Miss Brontë"; and she knew what absent or ailing members of the family to inquire after. Her quiet, gentle words, few though they might be, were evidently grateful to those Yorkshire ears. Their welcome to her, though rough and curt, was sincere and hearty.

We talked about the different courses through which life ran. She said, in her own composed manner, as if she had accepted the theory as a fact, that she believed some were appointed beforehand to sorrow and much disappointment; that it did not fall to the lot of all—as Scripture told us—to have their lines fall in pleasant places; that it was well for those who had rougher paths, to perceive that such was God's will concerning them, and try to moderate their expectations, leaving hope to those of a different doom, and seeking patience and resignation as the virtues they were to cultivate. I took a different view: I thought that human lots were more equal than she imagined; that to some happiness and sorrow came in strong patches of light and shadow, (so to speak), while in the lives of others they were pretty equally blended throughout. She smiled, and shook her head, and said she was trying to school herself against ever anticipating any pleasure; that it was better to be brave and submit faithfully; there was some good reason, which we should know in time, why sorrow and disappointment were to be the lot of some on earth. It was better to acknowledge this, and face out the truth in a religious faith.

John Stuart Mill's Autobiography

John Stuart Mill (1806–1873), philosopher and political economist, was educated privately under the guidance of his father, James Mill, who wished to fit his son for carrying out his own philosophical views. Young Mill's precocity is proved by his ability to read Greek before he was eight years old and by his study of history, logic, and political economy at ten. After continuing his philosophical and scientific studies in France for fourteen months, he was appointed junior clerk at seventeen at the India House in London, with which his father was connected. After many years of service, he became chief of this important bureau of the British government, but his deeper interest during all this time lay in the abstract studies begun in boyhood. He founded the Utilitarian and the Speculative Society, was one of a group of intellectuals with radical opinions, edited in succession several reviews, and wrote articles for leading periodicals which brought him to the notice of Carlyle and other literary men. By 1840 he was devoting himself to the development of a system of logic, published several years later, and in 1848 he brought out his *Principles of Political Economy,* an epoch-making book. After 1858 he lived most of the time at Avignon in Southern France, but spent three years, 1865 to 1868, in England as a member of the House of Commons. His famous *Essay on Liberty,* one of the clearest and most searching pieces of exposition in literature, appeared in 1859; other important works followed, among them one advocating equal political rights for women. He died at Avignon and is buried there. Mill's *Autobiography,* sketching his intellectual life to 1870, was published by his step-daughter in 1874. In the first chapter Mill thus sets forth his reasons for writing an account of his life: "It may be useful that there should be some record of an education which was unusual and remarkable, and which, whatever else it may have done, has proved how much more than is commonly supposed may be taught, and well taught, in those early years which, in the common modes of what is called instruction, are little

better than wasted. It has also seemed to me that in an age of transition in opinions, there may be something both of interest and of benefit in noting the successive phases of any mind which was always pressing forward, equally ready to learn and to unlearn either from its own thoughts or from those of others. But a motive which weighs more with me than either of these, is a desire to make acknowledgment of the debts which my intellectual development owes to other persons." The following selection, taken from Chapter V, deals with a critical phase of a young man's intellectual growth.

[The first edition of Mill's *Autobiography* was published in 1873, London; an American edition was published in 1887, New York; the most available is the Oxford (World's Classics).]

A MENTAL CRISIS

From the winter of 1821, when I first read Bentham, and especially from the commencement of the Westminster Review, I had what might truly be called an object in life; to be a reformer of the world. My conception of my own happiness was entirely identified with this object. The personal sympathies I wished for were those of fellow labourers in this enterprise. I endeavoured to pick up as many flowers as I could by the way; but as a serious and permanent personal satisfaction to rest upon, my whole reliance was placed on this; and I was accustomed to felicitate myself on the certainty of a happy life which I enjoyed, through placing my happiness in something durable and distant, in which some progress might be always making, while it could never be exhausted by complete attainment. This did very well for several years, during which the general improvement going on in the world and the idea of myself as engaged with others in struggling to promote it, seemed enough to fill up an interesting and animated existence. But the time came when I awakened from this as from a dream. It was in the autumn of 1826. I was in a dull state of nerves, such as everybody is occasionally liable to; unsusceptible to enjoyment or pleasurable excitement; one of those moods when what is pleasure at other times, becomes insipid or indifferent; the state, I should think, in which converts to Methodism usually are, when smitten by their first "conviction of sin." In this frame of mind it occurred to me to put the question directly to myself: "Suppose that all your objects in life were realized; that all the changes in institutions and opinions which you are looking forward to, could be completely effected at this very instant: would this be a great joy and happiness to you?" And an irrepressible self-consciousness distinctly answered, "No!" At this my heart sank within me: the whole foundation on which my life was constructed fell down. All my happiness was to have been found in the continual pursuit of this end. The end had ceased to charm, and how could there ever again be any interest in the means? I seemed to have nothing left to live for.

At first I hoped that the cloud would pass away of itself; but it did not. A night's sleep, the sovereign remedy for the smaller vexations of life, had no effect on it. I awoke to a renewed consciousness of the woful fact. I carried it with me into all companies, into all occupations. Hardly anything had power to cause me even a few minutes' oblivion of it. For some months the cloud seemed to grow thicker and thicker. The lines in Coleridge's "Dejection"—I was not then acquainted with them—exactly describe my case:

> A grief without a pang, void, dark and drear,
> A drowsy, stifled, unimpassioned grief,
> Which finds no natural outlet or relief
> In word, or sigh, or tear.

In vain I sought relief from my favourite books; those memorials of past nobleness and greatness from which I had always hitherto drawn strength and animation. I read them now without feeling, or with the accustomed feeling *minus* all its charm; and I became persuaded, that my love of mankind, and of excellence for its own sake, had worn itself out. I sought no comfort by speaking to others of what I felt. If I had loved any one sufficiently to make confiding my griefs a necessity, I should not have been in the condition I was. I felt, too, that mine was not an interesting, or in any way respectable distress. There was nothing in it to attract sympathy. Advice, if I had known where to seek it, would have been most precious. The words of Macbeth to the physician [1] often occurred to my thoughts. But there was no one on whom I could build the faintest hope of such assistance. My father, to whom it would have been natural to me to have recourse in any practical difficulties, was the last person to whom, in such a case as this, I looked for help. Everything convinced me that he had no knowledge of any such mental state as I was suffering from, and that even if he could be made to understand it, he was not the physician who could heal it. My education, which was wholly his work, had been conducted without any regard to the possibility of its ending in this result; and I saw no use in giving him the pain of thinking that his plans had failed, when the failure was probably irremediable, and, at all events, beyond the power of *his*

[1] Canst thou not minister to a mind diseased?
—*Macbeth, V, 4.*

remedies. Of other friends, I had at that time none to whom I had any hope of making my condition intelligible. It was however abundantly intelligible to myself; and the more I dwelt upon it, the more hopeless it appeared.

My course of study had led me to believe, that all mental and moral feelings and qualities, whether of a good or of a bad kind, were the results of association; that we love one thing, and hate another, take pleasure in one sort of action or contemplation, and pain in another sort, through the clinging of pleasurable or painful ideas to those things, from the effect of education or of experience. As a corollary from this, I had always heard it maintained by my father, and was myself convinced, that the object of education should be to form the strongest possible associations of the salutary class; associations of pleasure with all things beneficial to the great whole, and of pain with all things hurtful to it. This doctrine appeared inexpugnable; but it now seemed to me, on retrospect, that my teachers had occupied themselves but superficially with the means of forming and keeping up these salutary associations. They seemed to have trusted altogether to the old familiar instruments, praise and blame, reward and punishment. Now, I did not doubt that by these means, begun early, and applied unremittingly, intense associations of pain and pleasure, especially of pain, might be created, and might produce desires and aversions capable of lasting undiminished to the end of life. But there must always be something artificial and casual in associations thus produced. The pains and pleasures thus forcibly associated with things, are not connected with them by any natural tie; and it is therefore, I thought, essential to the durability of these associations, that they should have become so intense and inveterate as to be practically indissoluble, before the habitual exercise of the power of analysis had commenced. For I now saw, or thought I saw, what I had always before received with incredulity—that the habit of analysis has a tendency to wear away the feelings: as indeed it has, when no other mental habit is cultivated, and the analysing spirit remains without its natural complements and correctives. The very excellence of analysis (I argued) is that it tends to weaken and undermine whatever is the result of prejudice; that it enables us mentally to separate ideas which have only casually clung together: and no associations whatever could ultimately resist this dissolving force, were it not that we owe to analysis our clearest knowledge of the

permanent sequences in nature; the real connexions between Things, not dependent on our will and feelings; natural laws, by virtue of which, in many cases, one thing is inseparable from another in fact; which laws, in proportion as they are clearly perceived and imaginatively realized, cause our ideas of things which are always joined together in Nature, to cohere more and more closely in our thoughts. Analytic habits may thus even strengthen the associations between causes and effects, means and ends, but tend altogether to weaken those which are, to speak familiarly, a *mere* matter of feeling. They are therefore (I thought) favourable to prudence and clear-sightedness, but a perpetual worm at the root both of the passions and of the virtues; and, above all, fearfully undermine all desires, and all pleasures, which are the effects of association, that is, according to the theory I held, all except the purely physical and organic; of the entire insufficiency of which to make life desirable, no one had a stronger conviction than I had. These were the laws of human nature, by which, as it seemed to me, I had been brought to my present state. All those to whom I looked up, were of opinion that the pleasure of sympathy with human beings, and the feelings which made the good of others, and especially of mankind on a large scale, the object of existence, were the greatest and surest sources of happiness. Of the truth of this I was convinced, but to know that a feeling would make me happy if I had it, did not give me the feeling. My education, I thought, had failed to create these feelings in sufficient strength to resist the dissolving influence of analysis, while the whole course of my intellectual cultivation had made precocious and premature analysis the inveterate habit of my mind. I was thus, as I said to myself, left stranded at the commencement of my voyage, with a well-equipped ship and a rudder, but no sail; without any real desire for the ends which I had been so carefully fitted out to work for: no delight in virtue, or the general good, but also just as little in anything else. The fountains of vanity and ambition seemed to have dried up within me, as completely as those of benevolence. I had had (as I reflected) some gratification of vanity at too early an age: I had obtained some distinction, and felt myself of some importance, before the desire of distinction and of importance had grown into a passion: and little as it was which I had attained, yet having been attained too early, like all pleasures enjoyed too soon, it had made me *blasé* and indifferent to the pursuit. Thus neither selfish nor un-

selfish pleasures were pleasures to me. And there seemed no power in nature sufficient to begin the formation of my character anew, and create in a mind now irretrievably analytic, fresh associations of pleasure with any of the objects of human desire.

These were the thoughts which mingled with the dry heavy dejection of the melancholy winter of 1826–7. During this time I was not incapable of my usual occupations. I went on with them mechanically, by the mere force of habit. I had been so drilled in a certain sort of mental exercise, that I could still carry it on when all the spirit had gone out of it. I even composed and spoke several speeches at the debating society, how, or with what degree of success, I know not. Of four years' continual speaking at that society, this is the only year of which I remember next to nothing. Two lines of Coleridge, in whom alone of all writers I have found a true description of what I felt, were often in my thoughts, not at this time (for I had never read them), but in a later period of the same mental malady:

> Work without hope draws nectar in a sieve,
> And hope without an object cannot live.

In all probability my case was by no means so peculiar as I fancied it, and I doubt not that many others have passed through a similar state; but the idiosyncrasies of my education had given to the general phenomenon a special character, which made it seem the natural effect of causes that it was hardly possible for time to remove. I frequently asked myself, if I could, or if I was bound to go on living, when life must be passed in this manner. I generally answered to myself, that I did not think I could possibly bear it beyond a year. When, however, not more than half that duration of time had elapsed, a small ray of light broke in upon my gloom. I was reading, accidentally, Marmontel's "Memoires," and came to the passage which relates his father's death, the distressed position of the family, and the sudden inspiration by which he, then a mere boy, felt and made them feel that he would be everything to them—would supply the place of all that they had lost. A vivid conception of the scene and its feelings came over me, and I was moved to tears. From this moment my burden grew lighter. The oppression of the thought that all feeling was dead within me, was gone. I was no longer hopeless: I was not a stock or a stone. I had still, it seemed, some of the material

out of which all worth of character, and all capacity for happiness, are made. Relieved from my ever present sense of irremediable wretchedness, I gradually found that the ordinary incidents of life could again give me some pleasure; that I could again find enjoyment, not intense, but sufficient for cheerfulness, in sunshine and sky, in books, in conversation, in public affairs; and that there was, once more, excitement, though of a moderate kind, in exerting myself for my opinions, and for the public good. Thus the cloud gradually drew off, and I again enjoyed life: and though I had several relapses, some of which lasted many months, I never again was as miserable as I had been.

The experiences of this period had two very marked effects on my opinions and character. In the first place, they led me to adopt a theory of life, very unlike that on which I had before acted, and having much in common with what at that time I certainly had never heard of, the anti-self-consciousness theory of Carlyle. I never, indeed, wavered in the conviction that happiness is the test of all rules of conduct, and the end of life. But I now thought that this end was only to be attained by not making it the direct end. Those only are happy (I thought) who have their minds fixed on some object other than their own happiness; on the happiness of others, on the improvement of mankind, even on some art or pursuit, followed not as a means, but as itself an ideal end. Aiming thus at something else, they find happiness by the way. The enjoyments of life (such was now my theory) are sufficient to make it a pleasant thing, when they are taken *en passant,* without being made a principal object. Once make them so, and they are immediately felt to be insufficient. They will not bear a scrutinizing examination. Ask yourself whether you are happy, and you cease to be so. The only chance is to treat, not happiness, but some end external to it, as the purpose of life. Let your self-consciousness, your scrutiny, your self-interrogation, exhaust themselves on that; and if otherwise fortunately circumstanced you will inhale happiness with the air you breathe, without dwelling on it or thinking about it, without either forestalling it in imagination, or putting it to flight by fatal questioning. This theory now became the basis of my philosophy of life. And I still hold to it as the best theory for all those who have but a moderate degree of sensibility and of capacity for enjoyment, that is, for the great majority of mankind.

The other important change which my opinions at this time underwent, was that I, for the first time, gave its proper place, among the prime necessities of human well-being, to the internal culture of the individual. I ceased to attach almost exclusive importance to the ordering of outward circumstances, and the training of the human being for speculation and for action.

I had now learnt by experience that the passive susceptibilities needed to be cultivated as well as the active capacities, and required to be nourished and enriched as well as guided. I did not, for an instant, lose sight of, or undervalue, that part of the truth which I had seen before; I never turned recreant to intellectual culture, or ceased to consider the power and practice of analysis as an essential condition both of individual and of social improvement. But I thought that it had consequences which required to be corrected, by joining other kinds of cultivation with it. The maintenance of a due balance among the faculties, now seemed to me of primary importance. The cultivation of the feelings became one of the cardinal points in my ethical and philosophical creed. And my thoughts and inclinations turned in an increasing degree towards whatever seemed capable of being instrumental to that object.

I now began to find meaning in the things which I had read or heard about the importance of poetry and art as instruments of human culture. But it was some time longer before I began to know this by personal experience. The only one of the imaginative arts in which I had from childhood taken great pleasure, was music; the best effect of which (and in this it surpasses perhaps every other art) consists in exciting enthusiasm; in winding up to a high pitch those feelings of an elevated kind which are already in the character, but to which this excitement gives a glow and a fervour, which, though transitory at its utmost height, is precious for sustaining them at other times. This effect of music I had often experienced; but like all my pleasurable susceptibilities it was suspended during the gloomy period. I had sought relief again and again from this quarter, but found none. After the tide had turned, and I was in process of recovery, I had been helped forward by music, but in a much less elevated manner. I at this time first became acquainted with Weber's Oberon, and the extreme pleasure which I drew from its delicious melodies did me good, by showing me a source of pleasure to which I was as susceptible as ever. The good, however, was much impaired

by the thought, that the pleasure of music (as is quite true of such pleasure as this was, that of mere tune) fades with familiarity, and requires either to be revived by intermittence, or fed by continual novelty. And it is very characteristic both of my then state, and of the general tone of my mind at this period of my life, that I was seriously tormented by the thought of the exhaustibility of musical combinations. The octave consists only of five tones and two semitones, which can be put together in only a limited number of ways, of which but a small proportion are beautiful: most of these, it seemed to me, must have been already discovered, and there could not be room for a long succession of Mozarts and Webers, to strike out, as these had done, entirely new and surpassingly rich veins of musical beauty. This source of anxiety may, perhaps, be thought to resemble that of the philosophers of Laputa, who feared lest the sun should be burnt out. It was, however, connected with the best feature in my character, and the only good point to be found in my very unromantic and in no way honourable distress. For though my dejection, honestly looked at, could not be called other than egotistical, produced by the ruin, as I thought, of my fabric of happiness, yet the destiny of mankind in general was ever in my thoughts, and could not be separated from my own. I felt that the flaw in my life, must be a flaw in life itself; that the question was, whether, if the reformers of society and government could succeed in their objects, and every person in the community were free and in a state of physical comfort, the pleasures of life, being no longer kept up by struggle and privation, would cease to be pleasures. And I felt that unless I could see my way to some better hope than this for human happiness in general, my dejection must continue; but that if I could see such an outlet, I should then look on the world with pleasure; content as far as I was myself concerned, with any fair share of the general lot.

This state of my thoughts and feelings made the fact of my reading Wordsworth for the first time (in the autumn of 1828), an important event in my life. I took up the collection of his poems from curiosity, with no expectation of mental relief from it, though I had before resorted to poetry with that hope. In the worst period of my depression, I had read through the whole of Byron (then new to me), to try whether a poet, whose peculiar department was supposed to be that of the intenser feelings, could rouse any feeling in me. As

might be expected, I got no good from this reading, but the reverse. The poet's state of mind was too like my own. His was the lament of a man who had worn out all pleasures, and who seemed to think that life, to all who possess the good things of it, must necessarily be the vapid, uninteresting thing which I found it. His Harold and Manfred had the same burden on them which I had; and I was not in a frame of mind to desire any comfort from the vehement sensual passion of his Giaours, or the sullenness of his Laras. But while Byron was exactly what did not suit my condition, Wordsworth was exactly what did. I had looked into the Excursion two or three years before, and found little in it; and I should probably have found as little, had I read it at this time. But the miscellaneous poems, in the two-volume edition of 1815 (to which little of value was added in the latter part of the author's life), proved to be the precise thing for my mental wants at that particular juncture.

In the first place, these poems addressed themselves powerfully to one of the strongest of my pleasurable susceptibilities, the love of rural objects and natural scenery; to which I had been indebted not only for much of the pleasure of my life, but quite recently for relief from one of my longest relapses into depression. In this power of rural beauty over me, there was a foundation laid for taking pleasure in Wordsworth's poetry; the more so, as his scenery lies mostly among mountains, which, owing to my early Pyrenean excursion, were my ideal of natural beauty. But Wordsworth would never have had any great effect on me, if he had merely placed before me beautiful pictures of natural scenery. Scott does this still better than Wordsworth, and a very second-rate landscape does it more effectually than any poet. What made Wordsworth's poems a medicine for my state of mind, was that they expressed, not mere outward beauty, but states of feeling, and of thought coloured by feeling, under the excitement of beauty. They seemed to be the very culture of the feelings, which I was in quest of. In them I seemed to draw from a source of inward joy, of sympathetic and imaginative pleasure, which could be shared in by all human beings; which had no connexion with struggle or imperfection, but would be made richer by every improvement in the physical or social condition of mankind. From them I seemed to learn what would be the perennial sources of happiness, when all the greater evils of life shall have been removed. And I felt myself at once better and happier as I came under their

influence. There have certainly been, even in our own age, greater poets than Wordsworth; but poetry of deeper and loftier feeling could not have done for me at that time what his did. I needed to be made to feel that there was real, permanent happiness in tranquil contemplation. Wordsworth taught me this, not only without turning away from, but with a greatly increased interest in the common feelings and common destiny of human beings. And the delight which these poems gave me, proved that with culture of this sort, there was nothing to dread from the most confirmed habit of analysis. At the conclusion of the Poems came the famous Ode, falsely called Platonic, "Intimations of Immortality"; in which, along with more than his usual sweetness of melody and rhythm, and along with the two passages of grand imagery but bad philosophy so often quoted, I found that he too had had similar experience to mine; that he also had felt that the first freshness of youthful enjoyment of life was not lasting; but that he had sought for compensation, and found it, in the way in which he was now teaching me to find it. The result was that I gradually, but completely, emerged from my habitual depression, and was never again subject to it. I long continued to value Wordsworth less according to his intrinsic merits, than by the measure of what he had done for me. Compared with the greatest poets, he may be said to be the poet of unpoetical natures, possessed of quiet and contemplative tastes. But unpoetical natures are precisely those which require poetic cultivation. This cultivation Wordsworth is much more fitted to give, than poets who are intrinsically far more poets than he.

Forster's "Life of Dickens"

Among the versatile men of literary gifts in the mid-Victorian era was John Forster (1812–1876), whose profession was law, but whose love was something else. He had begun to write plays and dramatic criticism in boyhood, and soon after he came to London from his native Newcastle, he met Leigh Hunt, Charles Lamb, and other young literary men whose influence turned him towards letters. By 1833 he had become a regular contributor to several periodicals, among them the "Athenæum" and the "Examiner," for which he wrote articles on general literature, and particularly on the drama. In 1836 Forster began the publication of a series of Lives of the *Statesmen of the Commonwealth,* in five volumes, ending with an extensive *Life of Oliver Cromwell.* Short biographical sketches and criticism followed; then, becoming acquainted with the foremost dramatists and editors of the day, he took part with some of them in amateur theatricals, achieving along with Dickens and Lytton considerable success in the older comedies. He became editor of the "Daily News" in 1846, resigning the next year to accept a similar post with the "Examiner," which he held for nine or ten years. The next twenty years were chiefly devoted to writing biographies of Goldsmith, Landor, and Dickens, and historical treatises on the Tudor and Commonwealth periods; to editing Landor's *Imaginary Conversations,* and revising Dyce's edition of Shakespeare. He left his library of eighteen thousand volumes to the nation, now known as the "Forster Collection" in the South Kensington Museum and including, besides other valuable books and works of art, the original manuscripts of nearly all of Dickens's novels. Forster met Charles Dickens in 1836, as recorded in the biography, and for over thirty-three years was in the group of his closest friends. As a professional biographer of long experience, an intimate associate of the novelist, a diligent collector of documents, and temperamentally akin to his famous friend, Forster was perhaps better qualified than any other man of his time to write the life of Dickens. The biography of three

volumes was published successively in 1872, 1873, and 1874, and has been the basis for all subsequent Lives of the novelist; for it contains so much autobiographical matter, such as letters, conversations, and Dickens's own personal recollections, besides a great deal of contemporary literary history, that it has proved an indispensable mine of information to later biographers who have more accurately estimated the popular story-writer as a man and author. Forster's work has been paid the compliment of many editions, translation into at least two foreign languages, and an abridgment by a later English novelist; one edition, profusely illustrated, has still further popularized Forster's big book by pictorially relating it to the novels of the master. The passages below graphically reveal how Charles Dickens (1812–1870), the most widely read novelist of the nineteenth century, beginning in poverty, rose to literary fame and to fortune.

[An illustrated and fully annotated edition of Forster's *Life of Dickens*, by B. W. Matz, was published in 1911.]

A NOVELIST IN THE MAKING

The readers of Mr. Micawber's history who remember David's first visit to the Marshalsea prison, and how upon seeing the turnkey he recalled the turnkey in the blanket in *Roderick Random,* will read with curious interest what follows, written as a personal experience of fact two or three years before the fiction had even entered into his thoughts.

"My father was waiting for me in the lodge, and we went up to his room (on the top story but one), and cried very much. And he told me, I remember, to take warning by the Marshalsea, and to observe that if a man had twenty pounds a-year, and spent nineteen pounds nineteen shillings and sixpence, he would be happy; but that a shilling spent the other way would make him wretched. I see the fire we sat before, now; with two bricks inside the rusted grate, one on each side, to prevent its burning too many coals. Some other debtor shared the room with him, who came in by-and-by; and as the dinner was a joint-stock repast, I was sent up to 'Captain Porter' in the room overhead, with Mr. Dickens's compliments, and I was his son, and could he, Captain P., lend me a knife and fork?

"Captain Porter lent the knife and fork, with his compliments in return. There was a very dirty lady in his little room; and two wan girls, his daughters, with shock heads of hair. I thought I should not have liked to borrow Captain Porter's comb. The Captain himself was in the last extremity of shabbiness; and if I could draw at all, I would draw an accurate portrait of the old, old, brown great-coat he wore, with no other coat below it. His whiskers were large. I saw his bed rolled up in a corner; and what plates, and dishes, and pots he had, on a shelf; and I knew (God knows how) that the two girls with the shock heads were Captain Porter's natural children, and that the dirty lady was not married to Captain P. My timid, wondering station on his threshold, was not occupied more than a couple of minutes, I dare say; but I came down again to the room below with all this as surely in my knowledge, as the knife and fork were in my hand."

How there was something agreeable and gipsy-like in the dinner after all, and how he took back the Captain's knife and fork early in the afternoon, and how he went home to comfort his mother with an account of his visit, David Copperfield has also accurately told. Then, at home, came many miserable daily struggles that seemed to last an immense time, yet did not perhaps cover many weeks. Almost everything by degrees was sold or pawned, little Charles being the principal agent in those sorrowful transactions. Such of the books as had been brought from Chatham, *Peregrine Pickle, Roderick Random, Tom Jones, Humphrey Clinker,* and all the rest, went first. They were carried off from the little chiffonier, which his father called the library, to a bookseller in the Hampstead-road, the same that David Copperfield describes as in the City-road; and the account of the sales, as they actually occurred and were told to me long before David was born, was reproduced word for word in his imaginary narrative. "The keeper of this bookstall, who lived in a little house behind it, used to get tipsy every night, and to be violently scolded by his wife every morning. More than once, when I went there early, I had audience of him in a turn-up bedstead, with a cut in his forehead or a black eye, bearing witness to his excesses over night (I am afraid he was quarrelsome in his drink); and he, with a shaking hand, endeavouring to find the needful shillings in one or other of the pockets of his clothes, which lay upon the floor, while his wife, with a baby in her arms and her shoes down at heel, never left off rating him. Sometimes he had lost his money, and then he would ask me to call again; but his wife had always got some (had taken his, I dare say, while he was drunk), and secretly completed the bargain on the stairs, as we went down together."

The same pawnbroker's shop, too, which was so well known to David, became not less familiar to Charles; and a good deal of notice was here taken of him by the pawnbroker, or by his principal clerk who officiated behind the counter, and who, while making out the duplicate, liked of all things to hear the lad conjugate a Latin verb, and translate or decline his musa and dominus. Every thing to this accompaniment went gradually; until at last, even of the furniture of Gower-street number four, there was nothing left except a few chairs, a kitchen table, and some beds. Then they encamped, as it were, in the two parlours of the emptied house, and lived there night and day.

All which is but the prelude to what remains to be described . . .

The person indirectly responsible for the scenes to be described was the young relative James Lamert, the cousin by his mother's side of whom I have made frequent mention, who got up the plays at Chatham, and after passing at Sandhurst had been living with the family in Bayham-street in the hope of obtaining a commission in the army. This did not come till long afterwards, when, in consideration of his father's services, he received it, and relinquished it then in favour of a younger brother; but he had meanwhile, before the family removed from Camden-town, ceased to live with them. The husband of a sister of his (of the same name as himself, being indeed his cousin, George Lamert), a man of some property, had recently embarked in an odd sort of commercial speculation; and had taken him into his office, and his house, to assist in it. I give now the fragment of the autobiography of Dickens.

"This speculation was a rivalry of 'Warren's Blacking, 30, Strand,' —at that time very famous. One Jonathan Warren (the famous one was Robert), living at 30, Hungerford-stairs, or market, Strand (for I forget which it was called then), claimed to have been the original inventor or proprietor of the blacking recipe, and to have been deposed and ill-used by his renowned relation. At last he put himself in the way of selling his recipe, and his name, and his 30, Hungerford-stairs, Strand (30, Strand, very large, and the intermediate direction very small), for an annuity; and he set forth by his agents that a little capital would make a great business of it. The man of some property was found in George Lamert, the cousin and brother-in-law of James. He bought this right and title, and went into the blacking business and the blacking premises.

"—In an evil hour for me, as I often bitterly thought. Its chief manager, James Lamert, the relative who had lived with us in Bayham-street, seeing how I was employed from day to day, and knowing what our domestic circumstances then were, proposed that I should go into the blacking warehouse, to be as useful as I could, at a salary, I think, of six shillings a week. I am not clear whether it was six or seven. I am inclined to believe, from my uncertainty on this head, that it was six at first, and seven afterwards. At any rate the offer was accepted very willingly by my father and mother, and on a Monday morning I went down to the blacking warehouse to begin my business life.

"It is wonderful to me how I could have been so easily cast away at such an age. It is wonderful to me, that, even after my descent into the poor little drudge I had been since we came to London, no one had compassion enough on me—a child of singular abilities, quick, eager, delicate, and soon hurt, bodily or mentally—to suggest that something might have been spared, as certainly it might have been, to place me at any common school. Our friends, I take it, were tired out. No one made any sign. My father and mother were quite satisfied. They could hardly have been more so, if I had been twenty years of age, distinguished at a grammar-school, and going to Cambridge.

"The blacking warehouse was the last house on the left-hand side of the way, at old Hungerford-stairs. It was a crazy, tumble-down old house, abutting of course on the river, and literally overrun with rats. Its wainscotted rooms, and its rotten floors and staircase, and the old grey rats swarming down in the cellars, and the sound of their squeaking and scuffling coming up the stairs at all times, and the dirt and decay of the place, rise up visibly before me, as if I were there again. The counting-house was on the first floor, looking over the coal-barges and the river. There was a recess in it, in which I was to sit and work. My work was to cover the pots of paste-blacking; first with a piece of oil-paper, and then with a piece of blue paper; to tie them round with a string; and then to clip the paper close and neat, all round, until it looked as smart as a pot of ointment from an apothecary's shop. When a certain number of grosses of pots had attained this pitch of perfection, I was to paste on each a printed label; and then go on again with more pots. Two or three other boys were kept at similar duties downstairs on similar wages. One of them came up, in a ragged apron and a paper cap, on the first Monday morning, to show me the trick of using the string and tying the knot. His name was Bob Fagin; and I took the liberty of using his name, long afterwards in *Oliver Twist.*

"Our relative had kindly arranged to teach me something in the dinner-hour; from twelve to one, I think it was; every day. But an arrangement so incompatible with counting-house business soon died away, from no fault of his or mine; and for the same reason, my small work-table, and my grosses of pots, my papers, string, scizzors, paste-pot, and labels, by little and little, vanished out of the recess in the counting-house, and kept company with the other small work-tables,

grosses of pots, papers, string, scizzors, and paste-pots, downstairs. It was not long, before Bob Fagin and I, and another boy whose name was Paul Green, but who was currently believed to have been christened Poll (a belief which I transferred, long afterwards again, to Mr. Sweedlepipe, in *Martin Chuzzlewit*), worked generally, side by side. Bob Fagin was an orphan, and lived with his brother-in-law, a waterman. Poll Green's father had the additional distinction of being a fireman, and was employed at Drury-lane theatre; where another relation of Poll's, I think his little sister, did imps in the pantomimes.

"No words can express the secret agony of my soul as I sunk into this companionship; compared these every day associates with those of my happier childhood; and felt my early hopes of growing up to be a learned and distinguished man, crushed in my breast. The deep remembrance of the sense I had of being utterly neglected and hopeless; of the shame I felt in my position; of the misery it was to my young heart to believe that, day by day, what I had learned, and thought, and delighted in, and raised my fancy and my emulation up by, was passing away from me, never to be brought back any more; cannot be written. My whole nature was so penetrated with the grief and humiliation of such considerations, that even now, famous and caressed and happy, I often forget in my dreams that I have a dear wife and children; even that I am a man; and wander desolately back to that time of my life.

"My mother and my brothers and sisters (excepting Fanny in the royal academy of music) were still encamped, with a young servant-girl from Chatham-workhouse, in the two parlours in the emptied house in Gower-street north. It was a long way to go and return within the dinner hour, and, usually, I either carried my dinner with me, or went and bought it at some neighbouring shop. In the latter case, it was commonly a saveloy and a penny loaf; sometimes, a fourpenny plate of beef from a cook's shop; sometimes, a plate of bread and cheese, and a glass of beer, from a miserable old public-house over the way: the Swan, if I remember right, or the Swan and something else that I have forgotten. Once, I remember tucking my own bread (which I had brought from home in the morning) under my arm, wrapped up in a piece of paper like a book, and going into the best dining-room in Johnson's alamode beef-house in Charles-court, Drury-lane, and magnificently ordering a small plate

of alamode beef to eat with it. What the waiter thought of such a strange little apparition, coming in all alone, I don't know; but I can see him now, staring at me as I ate my dinner, and bringing up the other waiter to look. I gave him a halfpenny, and I wish, now, that he hadn't taken it."

I lose here for a little while the fragment of direct narrative, but I perfectly recollect that he used to describe Saturday night as his great treat. It was a grand thing to walk home with six shillings in his pocket, and to look in at the shop windows, and think what it would buy. Hunt's roasted corn, as a British and patriotic substitute for coffee, was in great vogue just then; and the little fellow used to buy it, and roast it on the Sunday. There was a cheap periodical of selected pieces called the *Portfolio,* which he had also a great fancy for taking home with him. The new proposed "deed," meanwhile, had failed to propitiate his father's creditors; all hope of arrangement passed away; and the end was that his mother and her encampment in Gower-street north broke up and went to live in the Marshalsea. I am able at this point to resume his own account.

"The key of the house was sent back to the landlord, who was very glad to get it; and I (small Cain that I was, except that I had never done harm to any one) was handed over as a lodger to a reduced old lady, long known to our family, in Little-college-street, Camden-town, who took children in to board, and had once done so at Brighton; and who, with a few alterations and embellishments, unconsciously began to sit for Mrs. Pipchin in *Dombey* when she took in me.

"She had a little brother and sister under her care then; somebody's natural children, who were very irregularly paid for; and a widow's little son. The two boys and I slept in the same room. My own exclusive breakfast, of a penny cottage loaf and a pennyworth of milk, I provided for myself. I kept another small loaf, and a quarter of a pound of cheese, on a particular shelf of a particular cupboard, to make my supper on when I came back at night. They made a hole in the six or seven shillings, I know well; and I was out at the blacking-warehouse all day, and had to support myself upon that money all the week. I suppose my lodging was paid for, by my father. I certainly did not pay it myself; and I certainly had no other assistance whatever (the making of my clothes, I think, excepted), from Monday morning until Saturday night. No advice, no counsel,

no encouragement, no consolation, no support, from any one that I can call to mind, so help me God.

"Sundays, Fanny and I passed in the prison. I was at the academy in Tenterden-street, Hanover-square, at nine o'clock in the morning, to fetch her; and we walked back there together, at night.

"I was so young and childish, and so little qualified—how could I be otherwise?—to undertake the whole charge of my own existence, that, in going to Hungerford-stairs of a morning, I could not resist the stale pastry put out at half-price on trays at the confectioners' doors in Tottenham-court-road; and I often spent in that, the money I should have kept for my dinner. Then I went without my dinner, or bought a roll, or a slice of pudding. There were two pudding shops between which I was divided, according to my finances. One was in a court close to St. Martin's-church (at the back of the church) which is now removed altogether. The pudding at that shop was made with currants, and was rather a special pudding, but was dear: two penn'orth not being larger than a penn'orth of more ordinary pudding. A good shop for the latter was in the Strand, somewhere near where the Lowther-arcade is now. It was a stout, hale pudding, heavy and flabby; with great raisins in it, stuck in whole, at great distances apart. It came up hot, at about noon every day; and many and many a day did I dine off it.

"We had half-an-hour, I think, for tea. When I had money enough, I used to go to a coffee-shop, and have half-a-pint of coffee, and a slice of bread and butter. When I had no money, I took a turn in Covent-garden market, and stared at the pineapples. The coffee-shops to which I most resorted were, one in Maiden-lane; one in a court (non-existent now) close to Hungerford-market; and one in St. Martin's-lane, of which I only recollect that it stood near the church, and that in the door there was an oval glass-plate, with COFFEE-ROOM painted on it, addressed towards the street. If I ever find myself in a very different kind of coffee-room now, but where there is such an inscription on glass, and read it backward on the wrong side MOOR-EEFFOC (as I often used to do then, in a dismal reverie), a shock goes through my blood.

"I know I do not exaggerate, unconsciously and unintentionally, the scantiness of my resources and the difficulties of my life. I know that if a shilling or so were given me by any one, I spent it in a dinner or a tea. I know that I worked, from morning to night, with

common men and boys, a shabby child. I know that I tried, but ineffectually, not to anticipate my money, and to make it last the week through; by putting it away in a drawer I had in the counting-house, wrapped into six little parcels, each parcel containing the same amount, and labelled with a different day. I know that I have lounged about the streets, insufficiently and unsatisfactorily fed. I know that, but for the mercy of God, I might easily have been, for any care that was taken of me, a little robber or a little vagabond.

"But I held some station at the blacking warehouse too. Besides that my relative at the counting-house did what a man so occupied, and dealing with a thing so anomalous, could, to treat me as one upon a different footing from the rest, I never said, to man or boy, how it was that I came to be there, or gave the least indication of being sorry that I was there. That I suffered in secret, and that I suffered exquisitely, no one ever knew but I. How much I suffered, it is, as I have said already, utterly beyond my power to tell. No man's imagination can overstep the reality. But I kept my own counsel, and I did my work. I knew from the first, that if I could not do my work as well as any of the rest, I could not hold myself above slight and contempt. I soon became at least as expeditious and as skilful with my hands, as either of the other boys. Though perfectly familiar with them, my conduct and manners were different enough from theirs to place a space between us. They, and the men, always spoke of me as 'the young gentleman.' A certain man (a soldier once) named Thomas, who was the foreman, and another named Harry, who was the carman and wore a red jacket, used to call me 'Charles' sometimes, in speaking to me; but I think it was mostly when we were very confidential, and when I had made some efforts to entertain them over our work with the results of some of the old readings, which were fast perishing out of my mind. Poll Green uprose once, and rebelled against the 'young gentleman' usage; but Bob Fagin settled him speedily.

"My rescue from this kind of existence I considered quite hopeless, and abandoned as such, altogether; though I am solemnly convinced that I never, for one hour, was reconciled to it, or was otherwise than miserably unhappy. I felt keenly, however, the being so cut off from my parents, my brothers, and sisters; and, when my day's work was done, going home to such a miserable blank; and *that,* I thought, might be corrected. One Sunday night I remon-

strated with my father on this head, so pathetically and with so many tears, that his kind nature gave way. He began to think that it was not quite right. I do believe he had never thought so before, or thought about it. It was the first remonstrance I had ever made about my lot, and perhaps it opened up a little more than I intended. A back-attic was found for me at the house of an insolvent-court agent, who lived in Lant-street in the borough, where Bob Sawyer lodged many years afterwards. A bed and bedding were sent over for me, and made up on the floor. The little window had a pleasant prospect of a timberyard; and when I took possession of my new abode, I thought it was a Paradise."

There is here another blank, which it is however not difficult to supply from letters and recollections of my own. What was to him of course the great pleasure of his paradise of a lodging, was its bringing him again, though after a fashion sorry enough, within the circle of home. From this time he used to breakfast "at home," in other words in the Marshalsea; going to it as early as the gates were open, and for the most part much earlier. They had no want of bodily comforts there. His father's income, still going on, was amply sufficient for that; and in every respect indeed but elbow-room, I have heard him say, the family lived more comfortably in prison than they had done for a long time out of it. They were waited on still by the maid-of-all-work from Bayham-street, the orphan girl of the Chatham workhouse, from whose sharp little worldly and also kindly ways he took his first impression of the Marchioness in the *Old Curiosity Shop*. She also had a lodging in the neighbourhood that she might be early on the scene of her duties; and when Charles met her, as he would do occasionally, in his lounging-place by London-bridge, he would occupy the time before the gates opened by telling her quite astonishing fictions about the wharves and the tower. "But I hope I believed them myself," he would say. Besides breakfast, he had supper also in the prison; and got to his lodging generally at nine o'clock. The gates closed always at ten.

I must not omit what he told me of the landlord of this little lodging. He was a fat, good-natured, kind old gentleman. He was lame, and had a quiet old wife; and he had a very innocent grown-up son, who was lame too. They were all very kind to the boy. He was taken with one of his old attacks of spasm one night, and the whole three of them were about his bed until morning. They were all dead

when he told me this, but in another form they live still very pleasantly as the Garland family in the *Old Curiosity Shop.*

He had a similar illness one day in the warehouse which I can describe in his own words. "Bob Fagin was very good to me on the occasion of a bad attack of my old disorder. I suffered such excruciating pain that time, that they made a temporary bed of straw in my old recess in the counting-house, and I rolled about on the floor, and Bob filled empty blacking-bottles with hot water, and applied relays of them to my side, half the day. I got better, and quite easy towards evening; but Bob (who was much bigger and older than I) did not like the idea of my going home alone, and took me under his protection. I was too proud to let him know about the prison; and after making several efforts to get rid of him, to all which Bob Fagin in his goodness was deaf, shook hands with him on the steps of a house near Southwark-bridge on the Surrey side, making believe that I lived there. As a finishing piece of reality in case of his looking back, I knocked at the door, I recollect, and asked, when the woman opened it, if that was Mr. Robert Fagin's house."

The Saturday nights continued, as before, to be precious to him. "My usual way home was over Blackfriars-bridge, and down that turning in the Blackfriars-road which has Rowland Hill's chapel on one side, and the likeness of a golden dog licking a golden pot over a shop door on the other. There are a good many little low-browed old shops in that street, of a wretched kind; and some are unchanged now. I looked into one a few weeks ago, where I used to buy bootlaces on Saturday nights, and saw the corner where I once sat down on a stool to have a pair of ready-made half-boots fitted on. I have been seduced more than once, in that street on a Saturday night, by a show-van at a corner; and have gone in, with a very motley assemblage, to see the Fat-pig, the Wild-indian, and the Little-lady. There were two or three hat-manufactories there, then (I think they are there still); and among the things which, encountered anywhere, or under any circumstances, will instantly recall that time, is the smell of hat-making."

His father's attempts to avoid going through the court having failed, all needful ceremonies had to be undertaken to obtain the benefit of the insolvent debtors' act; and in one of these little Charles had his part to play. One condition of the statute was that the wear-

ing apparel and personal matters retained were not to exceed twenty pounds sterling in value. "It was necessary, as a matter of form, that the clothes I wore should be seen by the official appraiser. I had a half-holiday to enable me to call upon him, at his own time, at a house somewhere beyond the Obelisk. I recollect his coming out to look at me with his mouth full, and a strong smell of beer upon him, and saying good-naturedly that 'that would do' and 'it was all right.' Certainly the hardest creditor would not have been disposed (even if he had been legally entitled) to avail himself of my poor white hat, little jacket, or corduroy trowsers. But I had a fat old silver watch in my pocket. which had been given me by my grandmother before the blacking days, and I had entertained my doubts as I went along whether that valuable possession might not bring me over the twenty pounds. So I was greatly relieved, and made him a bow of acknowledgment as I went out."

Still the want felt most by him was the companionship of boys of his own age. He had no such acquaintance. Sometimes, he remembered to have played on the coal-barges at dinner time, with Poll Green and Bob Fagin; but these were rare occasions. He generally strolled alone, about the back streets of the Adelphi; or explored the Adelphi arches. One of his favourite localities was a little public-house by the water side, approached by an underground passage called the Fox-under-the-hill, which we once vainly looked for together; and he had a vision which he has mentioned in *Copperfield* of sitting eating something on a bench outside, one fine evening, and looking at some coal-heavers dancing before the house. "I wonder what they thought of me," says David. He had himself already said the same in his fragment of autobiography.

Another characteristic little incident he made afterwards one of David's experiences, but I am able to give it here without the disguises that adapt it to the fiction. "I was such a little fellow, with my poor white hat, little jacket, and corduroy trowsers, that frequently, when I went into the bar of a strange public-house for a glass of ale or porter to wash down the saveloy and the loaf I had eaten in the street, they didn't like to give it me. I remember, one evening (I had been somewhere for my father, and was going back to the borough over Westminster-bridge), that I went into a public-house in Parliament-street, which is still there though altered, at

the corner of the short street leading into Cannon-row, and said to the landlord behind the bar, 'What is your very best—the VERY *best*—ale, a glass?' For, the occasion was a festive one, for some reason: I forget why. It may have been my birthday, or somebody else's. 'Twopence,' says he. 'Then,' says I, 'just draw me a glass of that, if you please, with a good head to it.' The landlord looked at me, in return, over the bar, from head to foot, with a strange smile on his face; and instead of drawing the beer, looked round the screen and said something to his wife, who came out from behind it, with her work in her hand, and joined him in surveying me. Here we stand, all three, before me now, in my study in Devonshire-terrace. The landlord, in his shirt sleeves, leaning against the bar window-frame; his wife, looking over the little half-door; and I, in some confusion, looking up at them from outside the partition. They asked me a good many questions, as what my name was, how old I was, where I lived, how I was employed, &c. &c. To all of which, that I might commit nobody, I invented appropriate answers. They served me with the ale, though I suspect it was not the strongest on the premises; and the landlord's wife, opening the little half-door and bending down, gave me a kiss that was half-admiring and half-compassionate, but all womanly and good, I am sure."

A later, and not less characteristic, incident of the true story of this time found also a place, three or four years after it was written, in his now famous fiction. It preceded but a short time the discharge, from the Marshalsea, of the elder Dickens; to whom a rather considerable legacy from a relative had accrued not long before ("some hundreds" I understood), and had been paid into court during his imprisonment. The scene to be described arose on the occasion of a petition drawn up by him before he left, praying, not for the abolition of imprisonment for debt as David Copperfield relates, but for the less dignified but more accessible boon of a bounty to the prisoners to drink his majesty's health on his majesty's forthcoming birthday.

"I mention the circumstance because it illustrates, to me, my early interest in observing people. When I went to the Marshalsea of a night, I was always delighted to hear from my mother what she knew about the histories of the different debtors in the prison; and when I heard of this approaching ceremony, I was so anxious to see them all come in, one after another (though I knew the greater part of them

already, to speak to, and they me), that I got leave of absence on purpose, and established myself in a corner, near the petition. It was stretched out, I recollect, on a great ironing-board, under the window, which in another part of the room made a bedstead at night. The internal regulations of the place, for cleanliness and order, and for the government of a common room in the ale-house; where hot water and some means of cooking, and a good fire, were provided for all who paid a very small subscription; were excellently administered by a governing committee of debtors, of which my father was chairman for the time being. As many of the principal officers of this body as could be got into the small room without filling it up, supported him, in front of the petition; and my old friend Captain Porter (who had washed himself, to do honour to so solemn an occasion) stationed himself close to it, to read it to all who were unacquainted with its contents. The door was then thrown open, and they began to come in, in a long file; several waiting on the landing outside, while one entered, affixed his signature, and went out. To everybody in succession, Captain Porter said, 'Would you like to hear it read?' If he weakly showed the least disposition to hear it, Captain Porter, in a loud sonorous voice, gave him every word of it. I remember a certain luscious roll he gave to such words as 'Majesty—gracious Majesty—your gracious Majesty's unfortunate subjects—your Majesty's well-known munificence,'—as if the words were something real in his mouth, and delicious to taste: my poor father meanwhile listening with a little of an author's vanity, and contemplating (not severely) the spikes on the opposite wall. Whatever was comical in this scene, and whatever was pathetic, I sincerely believe I perceived in my corner, whether I demonstrated or not, quite as well as I should perceive it now. I made out my own little character and story for every man who put his name to the sheet of paper. I might be able to do that now, more truly: not more earnestly, or with a closer interest. Their different peculiarities of dress, of face, of gait, of manner, were written indelibly upon my memory. I would rather have seen it than the best play ever played; and I thought about it afterwards, over the pots of paste-blacking, often and often. When I looked, with my mind's eye, into the Fleet-prison during Mr. Pickwick's incarceration, I wonder whether half-a-dozen men were wanting from the Marshalsea crowd that came filing in again, to the sound of Captain Porter's voice!"

THE NOVELIST COMES OF AGE

His new story [1] was now beginning largely to share attention with his *Pickwick Papers,* and it was delightful to see how real all its people became to him. What I had most indeed to notice in him, at the very outset of his career, was his indifference to any praise of his performances on the merely literary side, compared with the higher recognition of them as bits of actual life, with the meaning and purpose on their part, and the responsibility on his, of realities rather than creatures of fancy. The exception that might be drawn from *Pickwick* is rather in seeming than substance. A first book has its immunities, and the distinction of this from the rest of the writings appears in what has been said of its origin. The plan of it was simply to amuse. It was to string together whimsical sketches of the pencil by entertaining sketches of the pen; and, at its beginning, where or how it was to end was as little known to himself as to any of its readers. But genius is a master as well as a servant, and when the laughter and fun were at their highest something graver made its appearance. He had to defend himself for this; and he said that though the mere oddity of a new acquaintance was apt to impress one at first, the more serious qualities were discovered when we became friends with the man. In other words he might have said that the change was become necessary for his own satisfaction. The book itself, in teaching him what his power was, had made him more conscious of what would be expected from its use; and this never afterwards quitted him. In what he was to do hereafter, as in all he was doing now, with *Pickwick* still to finish and *Oliver* only beginning, it constantly attended him. Nor could it well be otherwise, with all those fanciful creations so real, to a nature in itself so practical and earnest; and in this spirit I had well understood the letter accompanying what had been published of *Oliver* since its commencement the preceding February, which reached me the day after I visited him. Something to the effect of what has just been said, I had remarked publicly of the portion of the story sent to me; and his instant warm-hearted acknowledgment, of which I permit myself to quote a line or two, showed me in what perfect agreement we were. "How can I thank you? Can I do better than by saying that

[1] *Oliver Twist.*

the sense of poor Oliver's reality, which I know you have had from the first, has been the highest of all praise to me. None that has been lavished upon me have I felt half so much as that appreciation of my intent and meaning. You know I have ever done so, for it was your feeling for me and mine for you that first brought us together, and I hope will keep us so, till death do us part. Your notices make me grateful but very proud; so have a care of them."

There was nothing written by him after this date which I did not see before the world did, either in manuscript or proofs; and in connection with the latter I shortly began to give him the help which he publicly mentioned twenty years later in dedicating his collected writings to me. One of his letters reminds me when these corrections began, and they were continued very nearly to the last. They lightened for him a labour of which he had more than enough imposed upon him at this time by others, and they were never anything but an enjoyment to me. "I have," he wrote, "so many sheets of the *Miscellany* to correct before I can begin *Oliver*, that I fear I shall not be able to leave home this morning. I therefore send your revise of the *Pickwick* by Fred, who is on his way with it to the printers. You will see that my alterations are very slight, but I think for the better. This was the fourteenth number of the *Pickwick Papers*. Fred was his next younger brother, who lived with him at the time.

The number following this was the famous one in which the hero finds himself in the Fleet, and another of his letters will show what enjoyment the writing of it had given to himself. I had sent to ask him where we were to meet for a proposed ride that day. "Here," was his reply. "I am slippered and jacketted, and, like that same starling who is so very seldom quoted, can't get out. I am getting on, thank Heaven, like 'a house o' fire,' and think the next *Pickwick* will bang all the others. I shall expect you at one, and we will walk to the stable together. If you know anybody at Saint Paul's, I wish you'd send round and ask them not to ring the bell so. I can hardly hear my own ideas as they come into my head, and say what they mean."

The exulting tone of confidence in what he had thus been writing was indeed well justified. He had as yet done nothing so remarkable, in blending humour with tragedy, as his picture of what the poor side of a debtor's prison was in the days of which we have seen that he

had himself had bitter experience; and we have but to recall, as it rises sharply to the memory, what is contained in this portion of a work that was not only among his earliest but his least considered as to plan, to understand what it was that not only had given him his fame so early, but that in itself held the germ of the future that awaited him. Every point was a telling one, and the truthfulness of the whole unerring. The dreadful restlessness of the place, undefined yet unceasing, unsatisfying and terrible, was pictured throughout with De Foe's minute reality; while points of character were handled in that greater style which connects with the richest oddities of humour an insight into principles of character universal as nature itself. When he resolved that Sam Weller should be occupant of the prison with Mr. Pickwick, he was perhaps thinking of his favourite Smollett, and how, when Peregrine Pickle was inmate of the Fleet, Hatchway and Pipes refused to leave him; but Fielding himself might have envied his way of setting about it. Nor is any portion of his picture less admirable than this. The comedy gradually deepening into tragedy; the shabby vagabonds who are the growth of debtors' prisons, contrasting with the poor simple creatures who are their sacrifices and victims; Mr. Mivins and Mr. Smangle side by side with the cobbler ruined by his legacy, who sleeps under the table to remind himself of his old four-poster; Mr. Pickwick's first night in the marshal's room; Sam Weller entertaining Stiggins in the snuggery, Jingle in decline, and the chancery prisoner dying; in all these scenes there was writing of the first order, a deep feeling of character, that delicate form of humour which has a quaintly pathetic turn in it as well, comedy of the richest and broadest kind, and the easy handling throughout of a master in his art. We place the picture by the side of those of the great writers of this style of fiction in our language, and it does not fall by the comparison.

Of what the reception of the book had been up to this time, and of the popularity Dickens had won as its author, this also will be the proper place to speak. For its kind, its extent, and the absence of everything unreal or factitious in the causes that contributed to it, it is unexampled in literature. Here was a series of sketches, without the pretence to such interest as attends a well-constructed story; put forth in a form apparently ephemeral as its purpose; having none that seemed higher than to exhibit some studies of cockney manners with help from a comic artist; and after four or five parts had ap-

peared, without newspaper notice or puffing, and itself not subserving in the public anything false or unworthy, it sprang into a popularity that each part carried higher and higher, until people at this time talked of nothing else, tradesmen recommended their goods by using its name, and its sale, outstripping at a bound that of all the most famous books of the century, had reached to an almost fabulous number. Of part one, the binder prepared four hundred; and of part fifteen, his order was for more than forty thousand. Every class, the high equally with the low, were attracted to it. The charm of its gaiety and good humour, its inexhaustible fun, its riotous overflow of animal spirits, its brightness and keenness of observation, and above all, the incomparable ease of its many varieties of enjoyment, fascinated everybody. Judges on the bench and boys in the street, gravity and folly, the young and the old, those who were entering life and those who were quitting it, alike found it to be irresistible. "An archdeacon," wrote Mr. Carlyle afterwards to me, "with his own venerable lips, repeated to me, the other night, a strange profane story: of a solemn clergyman who had been administering ghostly consolation to a sick person; having finished, satisfactorily as he thought, and got out of the room, he heard the sick person ejaculate: 'Well, thank God, *Pickwick* will be out in ten days anyway!'—This is dreadful."

Let me add that there was something more in it all than the gratification of mere fun and laughter, more even than the rarer pleasure that underlies the outbreak of all forms of genuine humour. Another chord had been struck. Over and above the lively painting of manners which at first had been so attractive, there was something that left deeper mark. Genial and irrepressible enjoyment, affectionate heartiness of tone, unrestrained exuberance of mirth, these are not more delightful than they are fleeting and perishable qualities; but the attention eagerly excited by the charm of them in *Pickwick,* found itself retained by something more permanent. We had all become suddenly conscious, in the very thick of the extravaganza of adventure and fun set before us, that here were real people. It was not somebody talking humorously about them, but they were there themselves. That a number of persons belonging to the middle and lower ranks of life (Wardles, Winkles, Wellers, Tupmans, Bardells, Snubbinses, Perkers, Bob Sawyers, Dodsons and Foggs,) had been somehow added to his intimate and familiar acquaintance, the or-

dinary reader knew before half a dozen numbers were out; and it took not many more to make clear to the intelligent reader, that a new and original genius in the walk of Smollett and Fielding had arisen in England.

Trevelyan's "Life of Macaulay"

The biographer of Lord Macaulay was his nephew, Sir George Otto Trevelyan (1838–1928). Like his famous uncle, he was a member of Parliament, an official in India, and an able historian. He held other high offices of state, being Lord of the Admiralty, chief Secretary to Ireland, and a member of the Gladstone government. In 1911 Trevelyan was awarded the Order of Merit by the King for his distinguished services to the nation, one of the most coveted honors among British subjects. The work for which Sir George Trevelyan has been much commended by scholars is his *History of the American Revolution,* in connection with which there was some correspondence between him and President Roosevelt. The *Life and Letters of Lord Macaulay* (1876) was one of the most widely read biographies of the nineteenth century; the publication of a new edition in 1923 shows that interest in the book continues. Thomas Babington Macaulay was, outside the novelists, probably the most popular prose writer of his century; he gave to history an appeal for general readers almost equal to that of fiction, while his essays, biographical and critical, supplied the literary culture of a multitude of men and women on both sides of the Atlantic. His inexhaustible fund of ready information, his rapid, metallic, and lucid style, and the dominant note of finality in his judgments, excited a glowing admiration for his extraordinary talents. And although a later generation prefers a less rhetorical manner of speech and more "sweet reasonableness" than Macaulay had, his clearness and his great knowledge will always win readers. It is a fine tribute his nephew pays him at the end of the *Life and Letters:* "He died . . . leaving behind him a great and honorable name, and the memory of a life every action of which was as clear and transparent as one of his own sentences." Trevelyan declared in the preface to the biography of his uncle that he was impelled by a sense of duty in writing it. In the first chapter he asserts: "I will suppress no trait in his disposition or incident in his career which might provoke

blame or question. Such in all points as he was, the world, which has been so indulgent to him, has a right to know him: and those who best love him do not fear the consequences of freely submitting his character and his actions to the public verdict." In the extracts below Macaulay is shown in relaxation and in literary labor.

[Standard editions of Trevelyan's *Life of Macaulay* were published in London in 1876, and in New York in 1909.]

MACAULAY AT PLAY AND AT WORK

The feelings with which Macaulay regarded children were near akin to those of the great writer to whom we owe the death of little Paul, and the meeting between the schoolboy and his mother in the eighth chapter of *David Copperfield*. "Have you seen the first number of *Dombey?*" he writes. "There is not much in it: but there is one passage which made me cry as if my heart would break. It is the description of a little girl who has lost an affectionate mother, and is unkindly treated by everybody. Images of that sort always overpower me, even when the artist is less skilful than Dickens." In truth, Macaulay's extreme sensibility to all which appealed to the sentiment of pity, whether in art or in nature, was nothing short of a positive inconvenience to him. He was so moved by the visible representation of distressing scenes that he went most unwillingly to the theatre, for which, during his Cambridge days, he had entertained a passionate, though passing, fondness. I remember well how, during the performance of Masks and Faces, the sorrows of the broken-down author and his starving family in their Grub Street garret entirely destroyed the pleasure which he otherwise would have taken in Mrs. Stirling's admirable acting. And he was hardly less easily affected to tears by that which was sublime and stirring in literature, than by that which was melancholy and pathetic. In August, 1851, he writes from Malvern to his niece Margaret: "I finished the *Iliad* to-day. I had not read it through since the end of 1837, when I was at Calcutta, and when you often called me away from my studies to show you pictures and to feed the crows. I never admired the old fellow so much, or was so strongly moved by him. What a privilege genius like his enjoys! I could not tear myself away. I read the last five books at a stretch during my walk to-day, and was at last forced to turn into a by-path, lest the parties of walkers should see me blubbering for imaginary beings, the creations of a ballad-maker who has been dead two thousand seven hundred years. What is the power and glory of Caesar and Alexander to that? Think what it would be to be

assured that the inhabitants of Monomotapa would weep over one's writings Anno Domini 4551!"

Macaulay was so devoid of egotism, and exacted so little deference and attention from those with whom he lived, that the young people around him were under an illusion which to this day it is pleasant to recall. It was long, very long, before we guessed that the world thought much of one who appeared to think so little of himself. I remember telling my school fellows that I had an uncle who was about to publish a History of England in two volumes, each containing 650 pages; but it never crossed my mind that the work in question would have anything to distinguish it except its length. As years went on, it seemed strange and unnatural to hear him more and more frequently talked of as a great man; and we slowly, and almost reluctantly, awoke to the conviction that "Uncle Tom" was cleverer, as well as more good-natured, than his neighbours.

Among other tastes which he had in common with children was an avidity for sight-seeing. "What say you," he asks Mr. Ellis, "to a visit to the Chinese Museum? It is the most interesting and curious sight that I know. If you like the plan, I will call on you at four. Or will you call on me? For I am halfway between the Temple and the wonder of the Celestial Empire." And again: "We treated the Clifton Zoo much too contemptuously. I lounged thither, and found more than sixpennyworth of amusement." "After breakfast I went to the Tower," he writes in his journal of 1839. "I found great changes. The wild beasts were all gone. The Zoological Gardens have driven paved courts and dark narrow cages quite out of fashion. I was glad for the sake of the tigers and leopards."

He was never so happy as when he could spend an afternoon in taking his nieces and nephews a round of London sights, until, to use his favorite expression, they "could not drag one leg after the other." If he had been able to have his own way, the treat would have recurred at least twice a week. On these occasions we drove into London in time for a sumptuous midday meal, at which everything that we liked best was accompanied by oysters, caviar, and olives, some of which delicacies he invariably provided with the sole object of seeing us reject them with contemptuous disgust. Then off we set under his escort, in summer to the bears and lions;

in winter to the Panorama of Waterloo, to the Colosseum in Regent's Park, or to the enjoyment of the delicious terror inspired by Madame Tussaud's Chamber of Horrors. When the more attractive exhibitions had been exhausted by too frequent visits, he would enliven with his irrepressible fun the dreary propriety of the Polytechnic, or would lead us through the lofty corridors of the British Museum, making the statues live and the busts speak by the spirit and colour of his innumerable anecdotes paraphrased off-hand from the pages of Plutarch and Suetonius. One of these expeditions is described in a letter to my mother in January, 1845. "Fanny brought George and Margaret, with Charley Cropper, to the Albany at one, yesterday. I gave them some dinner; fowl, ham, marrow-bones, tart, ice, olives, and champagne. I found it difficult to think of any sight for the children: however, I took them to the National Gallery, and was excessively amused with the airs of connoisseurship which Charley and Margaret gave themselves, and with Georgy's honestly avowed weariness. 'Let us go. There is nothing here that I care for at all.' When I put him into the carriage, he said, half sulkily: 'I do not call this seeing sights. I have seen no sight today.' Many a man who has laid out thirty thousand pounds on paintings would, if he spoke the truth, own that he cared as little for the art as poor Georgy."

Regularly every Easter, when the closing of the public offices drove my father from the Treasury for a brief holiday, Macaulay took our family on a tour among Cathedral-towns, varied by an occasional visit to the Universities. We started on the Thursday; spent Good Friday in one city and Easter Sunday in another, and went back to town on the Monday. This year it was Worcester and Gloucester; the next, York and Lincoln; then Lichfield and Chester, Norwich and Peterborough, Ely and Cambridge, Salisbury and Winchester. Now and then the routine was interrupted by a trip to Paris, or to the great churches on the Loire; but in the course of twenty years we had inspected at least once all the Cathedrals of England, or indeed of England and Wales, for we carried our researches after ecclesiastical architecture as far down in the list as Bangor. "Our party just filled a railway carriage," says Lady Trevelyan, "and the journey found his flow of spirits unfailing. It was a return to old times; a running fire of jokes, rhymes, puns, never ceasing. It

was a peculiarity of his that he never got tired on a journey. As the day wore on he did not feel the desire to lie back and be quiet, and he liked to find his companions ready to be entertained to the last."

Anyone who reads the account of Norwich and Bristol in the third chapter, or the account of Magdalen College in the eighth chapter, of the History, may form an idea of Macaulay's merits as a Cicerone in an old English provincial capital. To walk with him round the walls of York, or through the Rows of Chester; to look up at the towers of Lichfield from the spot where Lord Brook received his death-wound, or down upon Durham from the brow of the hill behind Neville's Cross; to hear him discourse on Monmouth and Bishop Ken beneath the roof of Longleat Hall, or give the rein to all the fancies and reminiscences, political, personal, and historical, which were conjured up by a drive past Old Sarum to Stonehenge, were privileges which a child could appreciate, but which the most learned of scholars might have envied.

When we returned to our inn in the evening, it was only an exchange of pleasures. Sometimes he would translate to us choice morsels from Greek, Latin, Italian, or Spanish writers, with a vigour of language and vivacity of manner which communicated to his impromptu version not a little of the air and the charm of the original. Sometimes he would read from the works of Sterne, or Smollet, or Fielding those scenes to which ladies might listen, but which they could not well venture to pick out for themselves. And when we had heard enough of the siege of Carthagena in *Roderick Random,* or of Lieutenant Le Fevre's death in *Tristram Shandy,* we would fall to capping verses, or stringing rhymes, or amusing ourselves with some game devised for the occasion which often made a considerable demand upon the memory or invention of the players. Of these games only a single trace remains. One of his nieces, unable to forecast the future of her sex, had expressed a regret that she could never hope to go in for a college examination. Macaulay thereupon produced what he was pleased to call a paper of questions in divinity, the contents of which afford a curious proof how constantly the lighter aspects of English sectarianism were present to his thoughts. The first three questions ran as follows:

1. "And this is law, I will maintain
Until my dying day, Sir,
That whatsoever king shall reign,
I'll be the Vicar of Bray, Sir."

"Then read Paul's epistles,
You rotten Arminian.
You won't find a passage
To support your opinion."

"When the lads of the village so merrily, ah!
Sound their tabours, I'll hand thee along.
And verily, verily, verily, ah!
Thou and I will be first in the throng."

To what sects did the three persons belong who express their sentiments in the three passages cited above? Is there anything in the third passage at variance with the usages of the sect to which it relates? Which of those three sects do you prefer? Which of the three bears the closest resemblance to Popery? Where is Bray? Through what reigns did the political life of the Vicar of Bray extend?

2. Define "Jumper," "Shaker," "Ranter," "Dunker."

3. Translate the following passage into the Quakeric dialect: "You and Sir Edward Ryan breakfasted with me on Friday, the eleventh of December."

Like all other men who play with a will, and who work to a purpose, Macaulay was very well aware of the distinction between work and play. He did not carry on the business of his life by desultory efforts, or in the happy moments of an elegant inspiration. Men have disputed, and will long continue to dispute, whether or not his fame was deserved; but no one who himself has written books will doubt that at any rate it was hardly earned. "Take at hazard," says Thackeray, "any three pages of the Essays or History: and, glimmering below the stream of the narrative, you, an average reader, see one, two, three, a half-score of allusions to other historic facts, characters, literature, poetry, with which you are acquainted. Your neighbour, who has *his* reading and *his* little stock of literature stowed away in his mind, shall detect more points,

allusions, happy touches, indicating not only the prodigious memory and vast learning of this master, but the wonderful industry, the honest, humble, previous toil of this great scholar. He reads twenty books to write a sentence; he travels a hundred miles to make a line of description." . . .

The main secret of Macaulay's success lay in this, that to extraordinary fluency and facility he united patient, minute, and persistent diligence. He well knew, as Chaucer knew before him, that

> There is na workeman
> That can bothe worken wel and hastilie.
> This must be done at leisure parfaitlie.

If this method of composition ever comes into fashion, books probably will be better, and undoubtedly will be shorter. As soon as he had got into his head all the information relating to any particular episode in his History (such, for instance, as Argyll's expedition to Scotland, or the attainder of Sir John Fenwick, or the calling in of the clipped coinage), he would sit down and write off the whole story at a headlong pace; sketching in the outlines under the genial and audacious impulse of a first conception; and securing in black and white each idea, and epithet, and turn of phrase, as it flowed straight from his busy brain to his rapid fingers. His manuscript, at this stage, to the eyes of any one but himself, appeared to consist of column after column of dashes and flourishes, in which a straight line, with a half-formed letter at each end, and another in the middle, did duty for a word. It was from amidst a chaos of such hieroglyphics that Lady Trevelyan, after her brother's death, deciphered that account of the last days of William which fitly closes the History.

As soon as Macaulay had finished his rough draft he began to fill it in at the rate of six sides of foolscap every morning; written in so large a hand, and with such a multitude of erasures, that the whole six pages were, on an average, compressed into two pages of print. This portion he called his "task," and he was never quite easy unless he completed it daily. More he seldom sought to accomplish; for he had learned by long experience that this was as much as he could do at his best; and except when at his best, he never would work at all. "I had no heart to write," he says in his

journal of March 6, 1851. "I am too self-indulgent in this matter, it may be: and yet I attribute much of the success which I have had to my habit of writing only when I am in the humour, and of stopping as soon as the thoughts and words cease to flow fast. There are therefore few lees in my wine. It is all the cream of the bottle."

Macaulay never allowed a sentence to pass muster until it was as good as he could make it. He thought little of recasting a chapter in order to obtain a more lucid arrangement, and nothing whatever of reconstructing a paragraph for the sake of one happy stroke or apt illustration. Whatever the worth of his labour, at any rate it was a labour of love.

> Antonio Stradivari has an eye
> That winces at false work, and loves the true.

Leonardo da Vinci would walk the whole length of Milan that he might alter a single tint in his picture of the Last Supper. Napoleon kept the returns of his army under his pillow at night, to refer to in case he was sleepless; and would set himself problems at the Opera, while the Overture was playing. "I have ten thousand men at Strasburg; fifteen thousand at Magdeburg; twenty thousand at Wurtzburg. By what stages must they march so as to arrive at Ratisbon on three successive days?" What his violins were to Stradivarius, and his fresco to Leonardo, and his campaigns to Napoleon, that was his History to Macaulay. How fully it occupied his thoughts did not appear in his conversation; for he steadily and successfully resisted any inclination to that most subtle form of selfishness, which often renders the period of literary creation one long penance to all the members of an author's family. But none the less his book was always in his mind; and seldom indeed did he pass a day or turn over a volume without lighting upon a suggestion which could be turned to useful purpose. In May, 1851, he writes: "I went to the Exhibition and lounged there during some hours. I never knew a sight which extorted from all ages, classes, and nations, such unanimous and genuine admiration. I felt a glow of eloquence, or something like it, come on me from the mere effect of the place, and I thought of some touches which will greatly improve my Steinkirk." It is curious to trace whence was derived the fire which sparkles through every line of terse and animated narrative, which

has preserved from unmerited oblivion the story of a defeat more glorious to the British arms than not a few of our victories.

Macaulay deserved the compliment which Cecil paid to Sir Walter Raleigh as the supreme of commendations: "I know that he can labour terribly." One example will serve for many in order to attest the pains which were ungrudgingly bestowed upon every section of the History.

"March 21.—To-morrow I must begin upon a difficult and painful subject, Glencoe."

"March 23.—I looked at some books about Glencoe. Then to the Athenæum, and examined the Scotch Acts of Parliament on the same subject. Walked a good way, meditating. I see my line. Home, and wrote a little, but thought and prepared more."

"March 25.—Wrote a little. Mr. Lovell Reeve, editor of the Literary Gazette, called, and offered to defend me about Penn. I gave him some memoranda. Then to Glencoe again, and worked all day with energy, pleasure, and, I think, success."

"March 26.—Wrote much. I have seldom worked to better purpose than on these three days."

"March 27.—After breakfast I wrote a little, and then walked through April weather to Westbourne Terrace, and saw my dear little nieces. Home and wrote more. I am getting on fast with this most horrible story. It is even worse than I thought. The Master of Stair is a perfect Iago."

"March 28.—I went to the Museum, and made some extracts about Glencoe."

On the 29th, 30th, and 31st of March, and the 1st and 2d of April, there is nothing relating to the History except the daily entry, "Wrote."

"April 3.—Wrote. This Glencoe business is infernal."

"April 4.—Wrote; walked round by London Bridge, and wrote again. To-day I finished the massacre. This episode will, I hope, be interesting."

"April 6.—Wrote to good purpose."

"April 7.—Wrote and corrected. The account of the massacre is now, I think, finished."

"April 8.—I went to the Museum, and turned over the Gazette de Paris, and the Dutch despatches of 1692. I learned much from the errors of the French Gazette, and from the profound silence of the

Dutch ministers on the subject of Glencoe. Home, and wrote."

"April 9.—A rainy and disagreeable day. I read a Life of Romney, which I picked up uncut in Chancery Lane yesterday: a quarto. That there should be two showy quarto lives of a man who did not deserve a duodecimo! Wrote hard, rewriting Glencoe."

"April 10.—Finished *Don Carlos*. I have been long about it; but twenty pages a day in bed while I am waiting for the newspaper will serve to keep up my German. A fine play, with all its faults. Schiller's good and evil genius struggled in it; as Shakespeare's good and evil genius, to compare greater things with smaller, struggled in *Romeo and Juliet*. *Carlos* is half by the author of the *Robbers,* and half by the author of *Wallenstein;* as *Romeo and Juliet* is half by the author of *Love's Labour's Lost* and half by the author of *Othello*. After *Romeo and Juliet* Shakespeare never went back, nor Schiller after *Carlos*. Wrote all the morning, and then to Westbourne Terrace. I chatted, played chess and dined there."

"April 11.—Wrote all the morning. Ellis came to dinner. I read him Glencoe. He did not seem to like it much, which vexed me though I am not partial to it. It is a good thing to find sincerity."

That author must have had a strong head, and no very exaggerated self-esteem, who while fresh from a literary success which had probably never been equalled, and certainly never surpassed, at a time when the book-sellers were waiting with almost feverish eagerness for anything that he chose to give them,—spent nineteen working days over thirty octavo pages, and ended by humbly acknowledging that the result was not to his mind.

When at length, after repeated revisions, Macaulay had satisfied himself that his writing was as good as he could make it, he would submit it to the severest of all tests, that of being read aloud to others. Though he never ventured on this experiment in the presence of any except his own family, and his friend Mr. Ellis, it may well be believed that even within that restricted circle, he had no difficulty in finding hearers. "I read," he says, in December, 1849, "a portion of my History to Hannah and Trevelyan with great effect. Hannah cried, and Trevelyan kept awake. I think what I have done as good as any part of the former volumes: and so thinks Ellis."

Froude's "Life of Carlyle"

From the hills of Devon, mother of famous sea-farers, came James Anthony Froude (1818–1894), liberal thinker and gentleman unafraid. As a student at Oxford, he came under the spell of that great churchman known to fame as Cardinal Newman. He took orders in the English Church, but by 1847 he had become very skeptical of High Church doctrines and decided to adopt literature as his profession. His religious autobiography, *The Nemesis of Faith* (1849), is the saddened record of his growing religious disillusion. Froude now turned to the writing of history and biography; his *History of England from the Fall of Wolsey to the Defeat of the Spanish Armada,* in twelve volumes, is his greatest work, while his Lives of Caesar and of Bunyan, two strangely contrasted themes, represent the best of his short critical biographies. Meanwhile he was contributing essays to several magazines, traveling in South Africa on government business and in the United States, the West Indies, and Australia. After the death of Freeman, the Oxford historian, who cordially disliked him, by an ironic turn of the wheel of fortune Froude was appointed his successor as Regius Professor of History at Oxford. Froude's somewhat austere personality and his satirical brilliancy in controversy made enemies, but Carlyle and many other contemporary men of genius were his warm friends. On Carlyle's death in 1881, Froude, as his literary executor, proceeded to prepare his friend's *Reminiscences* for publication. This small volume, it was asserted by many, appeared without proper editing; and when, several years later, his voluminous *Life of Carlyle* was published Froude was savagely assailed. More fuel was added to the fires of criticism when *The Memorials of Jane Welsh Carlyle* came out shortly afterwards. Charges of inexactitude and partisanship had been made against his historical writing, and these were intensified by the accusations of bad taste and inaccuracy in his biographical productions. This matter has already been discussed in the introduction to this volume and need not be elaborated here.

It is certain that no life of an eminent man, recently dead, had been so completely exposed in a biography as Carlyle's was by Froude. He who carefully reads this great work, however, will be impressed with Froude's sincerity of purpose. It is claimed that he has so misplaced the emphasis as to give an unjust impression of Carlyle, while telling the truth in detail. Dr. Johnson once replied to an inquiry of Boswell as to whether a man's peculiarities should be mentioned in a Life of him, that there was no question about including his peculiarities; the question was whether his vices should be told. Carlyle seems not to have had any vices; but he did have peculiarities, and it is these that Froude put in his book, which is a remarkably lifelike work. The selection which follows is not only representative of Froude's method and manner but is a classic account of a great man's loss, his fortitude, and his admirable power in restoring the child of his brain.

[The standard edition of Froude's *Life of Carlyle,* in 4 vols., is that of Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1882–1884, by whose permission the following selections are used.]

REWRITING THE FRENCH REVOLUTION

So Carlyle's first winter in London was passing away. His prospects were blank, and the society in which he moved gave him no particular pleasure, but it was good of its kind, and was perhaps more agreeable to him than he knew. His money would hold out till the book was done at the rate at which it was progressing. The first volume was finished. On the whole he was not dissatisfied with it. It was the best that he could do, and he was, for him, in moderately fair spirits. But the strain was sharp; his "labour-pains" with his books were always severe. He had first to see that the material was pure, with no dross of lies in it, and then to fuse it all into white heat before it would run into the mould, and he was in no condition to bear any fresh burden. Alas for him, he had a stern taskmistress. Providence or destiny (he himself always believed in Providence, without reason as he admitted, or even against reason) meant to try him to the utmost. Not only was all employment closed in his face, save what he could make for himself, but it was as if something said "Even this too you shall not do till we have proved your mettle to the last." A catastrophe was to overtake him, which for a moment fairly broke his spirit, so cruel it seemed—for the moment, but for the moment only. It served in fact to show how admirably, though in little things so querulous and irritable, he could behave under real misfortunes.

John Mill,[1] then his closest and most valuable friend, was ardently interested in the growth of the new book. He borrowed the manuscript as it was thrown off, that he might make notes and suggestions, either for Carlyle's use, or as material for an early review. The completed first volume was in his hands for this purpose, when one evening, the 6th of March, 1835, as Carlyle was sitting with his wife, "after working all day like a nigger" at the Feast of Pikes,[2]

[1] John Stuart Mill (1806–1873), English philosopher, author of books on logic and political economy and of a famous *Essay on Liberty*.

[2] "Feast of Pikes," a celebration in Paris on the first anniversary of the fall of the Bastille, July 14, 1790, described by Carlyle in his *French Revolution*, Bk. I, chap. xii.

a rap was heard at the door, a hurried step came up the stairs, and Mill entered deadly pale, and at first unable to speak. "Why, Mill," said Carlyle, "what ails ye, man? What is it?" Staggering, and supported by Carlyle's arm, Mill gasped out to Mrs. Carlyle to go down and speak to someone who was in a carriage in the street. Both Carlyle and she thought that a thing which they had long feared must have actually happened, and that Mill had come to announce it, and to take leave of them. So genuine was the alarm that the truth when it came out was a relief. Carlyle led his friend to a seat "the very picture of desperation." He then learned in broken sentences that his manuscript, "left out in too careless a manner after it had been read," was, "except four or five bits of leaves, irrevocably annihilated." That was all, nothing worse; but it was ugly news enough, and the uglier the more the meaning of it was realised. Carlyle wrote always in a highly wrought quasi-automatic condition both of mind and nerves. He read till he was full of his subject. His notes, when they were done with, were thrown aside and destroyed; and of this unfortunate volume, which he had produced as if "possessed" while he was about it, he could remember nothing. Not only were "the fruits of five months of steadfast, occasionally excessive, and always sickly and painful toil" gone irretrievably, but the spirit in which he had worked seemed to have fled too, not to be recalled; worse than all, his work had been measured carefully against his resources, and the household purse might now be empty before the loss could be made good. The carriage and its occupant drove off—and it would have been better had Mill gone too after he had told his tale, for the forlorn pair wished to be alone together in the face of such a calamity. But Carlyle, whose first thought was of what Mill must be suffering, made light of it, and talked of indifferent things, and Mill stayed and talked too—stayed, I believed, two hours. At length he left them. Mrs. Carlyle told me that the first words her husband uttered as the door closed were: "Well, Mill, poor fellow, is terribly cut up; we must endeavour to hide from him how very serious this business is to us."

The money part of the injury Mill was able to repair. He knew Carlyle's circumstances. He begged, and at last passionately entreated, Carlyle not to punish him by making him feel that he had occasioned real distress to friends whom he so much honoured; and

he enclosed a check for £200, the smallest sum which he thought that he could offer. Carlyle returned it; but, his financial condition requiring that he should lay his pride aside, he intimated that he would accept half, as representing the wages of five months' labour. To this Mill unwillingly consented. He sent a hundred pounds, and, so far as money went, Carlyle was in the same position as when he began to write. He was not aware till he tried it what difficulty he would find in replacing what had been destroyed; and he was able to write to his brother of what had happened, before he did try again, as of a thing which had ceased to distress him.

To John Carlyle

Chelsea: March 23.

I am busy with vol. ii., toiling away with the heart of a free Roman. Indeed, I know not how it was, I had not felt so clear and independent, sure of myself and of my task, for many long years. There never in my life had come upon me any other *accident* of much moment; but this I could not but feel to be a sore one. The thing was lost, and perhaps worse, for I had not only forgotten all the structure of it, but the spirit it was written in was past. Only the general impression seemed to remain, and the recollection that I was on the whole satisfied with that, and could now hardly hope to equal it. Mill, whom I had to comfort and speak peace to, remained injudiciously enough till almost midnight; and my poor dame and I had to sit talking of indifferent matters, and could not till then get our lament fairly uttered. *She* was very good to me, and the thing did not beat us. That night was a hard one; something from time to time tying me tight, as it were, all round the region of the heart, and strange dreams haunting me. However, I was not without good thoughts, too, that came like healing life into me; and I got it somewhat reasonably crushed down. I have got back my spirits, and hope I shall go on tolerably. I was for writing to you next day after it happened, but Jane suggested it would only grieve you till I could say it was in the way towards adjustment.

To resolve to rewrite the burnt volume was easier than to do it. The *"Fête des Piques"* at which Carlyle had been engaged was leisurely finished. He then turned back to the death of Louis XV.,

the most impressive passage in the whole book as he eventually finished it, but he found that it would not prosper with him.

"The accident had grown tolerable to me," he says, "sometimes looked indifferent. But now when I actually come to try if I can repair it, I want of all things humility, faith. It is a sore loss I have had, but well taken, I will firmly believe, might become a gain. The wages part of it does next to nothing for me. I might all but as well have gone without wages. However, it was only gigmanity [3] that hinted at that, to which I needed not give any ear."

Wages, indeed, could only be useful to enable the work to recover itself, but it seemed as if the mirror had been broken and the image irrevocably gone.

"Miserable!" (he enters in his notebook on the 10th of April). "I can in no way get on with this wretched book of mine. For the last fortnight, morever, there seems to have been a kind of conspiracy of people to ask us out, from every one of which expeditions, were it only to 'tea and no party,' I return lamed for the next day. My sight, inward as well as outward, is all as if bedimmed. I grow desperate, but that profits not. Mrs. Somerville's rout the other night, from which I whisked out in about an hour. Mad as Bedlam is that whole matter!"

There was no hope now of the promised summer holiday when John Carlyle was to come home from Italy, and the "French Revolution" was to have been finished, and the brothers to have gone to Scotland together and settled their future plans in family council. Holidays were not now to be thought of, at least till the loss was made good. Then, as always when in real trouble, Carlyle faced his difficulties like a man. . . .

Carlyle was brave; his *Heldin* cheering him with word and look, his brother strong upon his own feet and heartily affectionate. But he needed all that affection could do for him. The "accelerated speed" slackened to slow, and then to no motion at all. He sat daily at his desk, but his imagination would not work. Early in May, for the days passed heavily, and he lost the count of them, he notes "that at no period of his life had he ever felt more disconsolate, beaten down, and powerless than then"; as if it were "simply im-

[3] Vulgar pride; a favorite phase of Carlyle (Froude's note).—"Gigmanity," from gigman, refers to those who "kept a gig" and who consequently regarded themselves as superior.

possible that his weariest and miserablest of tasks should ever be accomplished." A man can rewrite what he has known, but he cannot rewrite what he has felt. Emotion forcibly recalled is artificial, and, unless spontaneous, is hateful. He laboured on "with the feeling of a man swimming in a rarer and rarer element." At length there was no element at all. "My will," he said, "is not conquered, but my vacuum of element to swim in seems complete." He locked up his papers, drove the subject out of his mind, and sat for a fortnight reading novels, English, French, German—anything that came to hand. "In this determination," he thought, "there might be instruction for him." It was the first of the kind that he had ever deliberately formed. He would keep up his heart. He would be idle, he would rest. He would try, if the word were not a mockery, to enjoy himself.

It was a mere chance at this time that the "French Revolution" and literature with it were not flung aside for good and all, and that the Carlyle whom the world knows had never been. If Charles Buller, or Molesworth, or any other leading Radical who had seen his worth, had told the Government that if they meant to begin in earnest on the education of the people, here was the man for them, Carlyle would have closed at once with the offer. The effort of writing, always great (for he wrote, as his brother said, "with his heart's blood" in a state of fevered tension), the indifference of the world to his past work, his uncertain future, his actual poverty, had already burdened him beyond his strength. He always doubted whether he had any special talent for literature. He was conscious of possessing considerable powers, but he would have preferred at all times to have found a use for them in action. And everything was now conspiring to drive him into another career. If nothing could be found for him at home, America was opening its arms. He could lecture for a season in New England, save sufficient money, and then draw away into the wilderness, to build a new Scotsbrig[4] in the western forest. So the possibility presented itself to him in this interval of enforced helplessness. He would go away and struggle with the stream no more. And yet at the bottom of his mind, as he told me, something said to him, "My good fellow, you are not fit for that either." Perhaps he felt that when he was

[4] A farm in Dumfriesshire where Carlyle's mother lived.

once across the water, America would at any rate be a better mother to him than England, would find what he was suited for, and would not let his faculties be wasted. In writing to his mother he made light of his troubles, but his spirit was nearly broken.

To John Carlyle

Chelsea: June 15, 1835.

My poor ill-starred "French Revolution" is lying as a mass of unformed rubbish, fairly laid by under lock and key. About a fortnight after writing to you last this was the deliberate desperate resolution I came to. My way was getting daily more intolerable, more inconsiderable, comparable, as I often say, to a man swimming *in vacuo*. There was labour nigh insufferable, but no joy, no furtherance. My poor nerves, for long months kept at the stretch, felt all too waste, distracted. I flung it off by saying, "If I never write it, why then it will never be written. Not by ink alone shall man live or die." This is the first time in my life I ever did such a thing; neither do I doubt much but that it was rather wise. It goes abreast with much that is coming to a crisis with me. You would feel astonished to see with what quietude I have laid down my head on its stone pillow in these circumstances, and said to Poverty, Dispiritment, Exclusion, Necessity, and the Devil, "Go your course, friends; behold, I lie here and rest." In fact, with all the despair that is 'round about me, there is not in myself, I do think, the least desperation. I feel rather as if, quite possibly, I might be about bursting the accursed enchantment that has held me, all my weary days, in *nameless* thraldom, and actually beginning to be alive. There has been much given me to suffer, to learn from, this last year. That things should come to a crisis is what I wish. Also how true it is, *Deux afflictions mises ensemble peuvent devenir une consolation.* On the whole I shall never regret coming to London, where if boundless confusion, some elements of order have also met me; above all things, the real faces and lives of my fellow mortals, stupid or wise, so unspeakably instructive to me. Fancy me for the present reading all manner of silly books, and for these late days one pregnant book, Dante's *Inferno;* running about amongst people and things, looking even of a bright sunset on Hyde Park and its glory; I sitting on the stump of an oak, it rolling and curvetting

past me on the Serpentine drive, really very superb and given gratis. Unspeakable thoughts rise out of it. This, then, is the last efflorescence of the Tree of Being. Hengst and Horsa were bearded, but ye gentlemen have got razors and breeches; and oh, my fair ones, how are ye changed since Boadicea wore her own hair unfrizzled hanging down as low as her hips! The Queen Anne hats and heads have dissolved into air, and behold you here and me, prismatic light-streaks on the bosom of the sacred night. And so it goes on.

Things after this began to brighten. Mrs. Welsh came up to cheer her daughter, whose heart had almost failed like her husband's, for she had no fancy for an American forest. Carlyle went vigorously to work, and at last successfully. In ten days he had made substantial progress, though with "immense difficulty" still. "It was and remained the most ungrateful and intolerable task he had ever undertaken." But he felt that he was getting on with it, and recovered his peace of mind. He even began to be interested again in the subject itself, which had become for the time entirely distasteful to him, and to regret that he could not satisfy himself better in his treatment of it. Notwithstanding his defence of his style to Sterling,[5] he wished the skin were less "rhinoceros-like."

Journal

July 15, 1835.—The book, I do honestly apprehend, will never be worth almost anything. What a deliverance, however, merely to have done with it! This is almost my only motive now. I detest the task, but am hounded into it by feelings still more detestable. I am all wrong about it in my way of setting it forth, and *cannot* mend myself. I think often I have mistaken my trade. That of style gives me great uneasiness. So many persons, almost everybody that speaks to me, objects to my style as "too full of meaning." Had it no other fault! I seldom read in any dud of a book, novel, or the like, where the writing seems to flow along like talk (certainly not "too full") without a certain pain, a certain envy. Ten pages of that were easier than a sentence or paragraph of

[5] John Sterling (1806–1844), a journalist, friend of Carlyle and the subject of his *Life of John Sterling*.

mine; and yet such is the result. What to do? To write on *the best one can,* get the free'st, sincerest possible utterance, taking in all guidances towards that, putting aside with best address all misguidances. Truly I feel like one that was bursting with meaning, that had no utterance for it, that would and must get one—a most indescribably uneasy feeling, were it not for the hope.

Gradually the story which he was engaged in telling got possession of him again. The terrible scenes of the Revolution seized his imagination, haunting him as he walked about the streets. London and its giddy whirl of life, that too might become as Paris had been. Ah! and what was it all but a pageant passing from darkness into darkness? . . . By August 10 Carlyle was within sight of the end of the unfortunate volume which had cost him so dear, and could form a notion of what he had done. His wife, an excellent judge, considered the second version better than the first. Carlyle himself thought it worse, but not much worse; at any rate he was relieved from the load, and could look forward to finishing the rest. Sometimes he thought the book would produce an effect; but he had hoped the same from "Sartor," and he did not choose to be sanguine a second time. On September 23 he was able to tell his brother that the last line of the volume was actually written, that he was entirely exhausted and was going to Annandale to recover himself.

To John Carlyle

Chelsea: September 23, 1835.

By the real blessing and favour of Heaven I got done with that unutterable MS. on Monday last, and have wrapped it up there to lie till the other two volumes be complete. The work does not seem to myself to be very much worse than it was. It is worse in the style of expression, but better compacted in the thought. On the whole I feel like a man who had nearly killed himself in accomplishing zero. What a deliverance! I shall never without a kind of shudder look back at the detestable state of enchantment I have worked in for these six months and am now blessedly delivered from. The rest of the book shall go on quite like child's play in comparison. Also I do think it will be a queer book, one of the queerest published in this century, and *can,* though it cannot be popular, be

better than that. My Teufelsdröckh[6] humour, no voluntary one, of looking through the clothes, finds singular scope in this subject. Remarkable also is the "still death-defiance" I have settled into, equivalent to the most absolute sovereignty conceivable by the mind. I say "still death-defiance," yet it is not unblended with a great fire of hope unquenchable, which glows up silent, steady, brighter and brighter. My one thought is to be done with this book. Innumerable things point all that way. My whole destiny seems as if it lost itself in chaos there (for my money also gets done then)—in chaos which I am to recreate or perish miserably—an arrangement which I really regard as blessed comparatively. So I sit here and write, composed in mood, responsible to no man and no thing; only to God and my own conscience, with publishers, reviewers, hawkers, bill-stickers indeed on the earth around me, but with the stars and the azure eternity above me in the heavens. Let us be thankful. On the whole I am rather stupid; or rather I am not stupid, for I feel a fierce glare of insight in me into many things. Not stupid, but I have no *sleight of hand,* a raw untrained savage—for every trained civilized man has that sleight, and is a bred workman by having it, the bricklayer with his trowel, the painter with his brush, the writer with his pen. The result of the whole is "one must just do the best he can for a living, boy," or, in my mother's phrase, "Never tine heart," or get provoked heart, which is likewise a danger.

As the end of the book came in view, the question—what next? began to present itself. It was as morning twilight after a long night, and surrounding objects showed in their natural form. Evidently Carlyle did not expect that it would bring him money or directly better his fortunes. All that he looked for was to have acquitted his conscience by writing it: he would then quit literature and seek other work. The alternative, indeed, did not seem to be left to him—literature as a profession, followed with a sacred sense of responsibility (and without such a sense he could have nothing to do with it), refused a living to himself and his wife. For her sake as well as his own, he must try something else. He was in no hurry to choose. His plan, so far as he could form one, was that, as soon as the book was published, his wife should return for a while

[6] Teufelsdröckh, a fictitious whimsical German philosopher and professor in Carlyle's *Sartor Resartus.*

to her mother. He, like his own Teufelsdröckh, would take staff in hand, travel on foot about the world like a mediæval monk, look about him, and then decide. Ten years before, he had formed large hopes of what he might do and become as a man of letters. He concluded now that he had failed, and the language in which he wrote about it is extremely manly.

Journal

October 23.—Nothing noted here for a long time. It has grown profitless, wearisome, to write or speak of one so sick, forlorn as myself. Cap. 3 (Girondins) finished about a week ago. Totally worthless, according to my feeling of it. I persist, nevertheless. "Diamond Necklace" to be printed in "Fraser." Sitting for my picture to a man named Lewis, who begged it, "that it might do him good." Jane insisted. I at length assented. *Cui bono?* Empty as I am in purse and in hope, what steads the oil shadow of me in these circumstances? Rather let such a man be altogether suppressed.

So the year wore out, and in this humour the "History of the French Revolution" was finished. The last sentence was written on the 12th of January, 1837, on a damp evening, just as light was failing. Carlyle gave the MS. to his wife to read, and went out to walk. Before leaving the house he said to her: "I know not whether this book is worth anything, nor what the world will do with it, or misdo, or entirely forbear to do, as is likeliest; but this I could tell the world: You have not had for a hundred years any book that comes more direct and flamingly from the heart of a living man. Do what you like with it, you—." Five days later he announced the event to Sterling, who was spending the winter at Bordeaux.

To John Sterling

Chelsea: January 17, 1837.

Five days ago I finished about ten o'clock at night, and was ready both to weep and pray, but did not do either, at least not visibly or audibly. The bookseller has it, and the printer has it: I expect the first sheet to-morrow. In not many more weeks I can hope to wash my hands of it for ever and a day. It is a thing disgusting to me by

the faults of it: the merits of which—for it is not without merit—will not be seen for a long time. It is a wild savage book, itself a kind of French Revolution, which perhaps, if Providence have so ordered, the world had better not accept when offered it. With all my heart. What I do know of it is that it has come hot out of my own soul, born in blackness, whirlwind and sorrow; that no man for a long while has stood, speaking so completely alone, under the eternal azure in the character of man only, or is likely for a long while so to stand; finally, that it has gone as near to choking the life out of me as any task I should like to undertake for some years to come, which also is an immense comfort, indeed the greatest of all.

The Mason's ways are
A type of existence,
And his persistence
Is as the days are
Of men in this world.

The future hides in it
Gladness and sorrow;
We press still thorough,
Naught that abides in it
Daunting us, onward.

And solemn before us
Veiled the dark Portal,
Goal of all Mortals;
Stars silent rest o'er us,
Graves under us silent.

While earnest thou gazest
Comes boding of terror,
Comes phantasm and error,
Perplexes the bravest
With doubt and misgiving.

But heard are the voices,
Heard are the sage's,
The world's, and the age's.
Choose well: your choice is
Brief and yet endless.

Here eyes do regard you
In eternity's stillness,
Here is all fullness,
Ye brave, to reward you.
Work and despair not.

Is not that a piece of psalmody? It seems to me like a piece of marching music to the great brave Teutonic kindred as they march through the waste of time—that section of eternity they were appointed for. *Oben die Sterne und unten die Graber,* &c. Let us all sing it and march on cheerful of heart. "We bid you to hope." So say the voices, do they not?

This poem of Goethe's was on Carlyle's lips to the last days of his life. When very near the end he quoted the last lines of it to me when speaking of what might lie beyond. "We bid you to hope."

"The Education of Henry Adams"

The intellectual autobiography of Henry Adams (1838–1918) is unique in American life-writing. The author of this analytic narrative, written in the third person, was the great-grandson of one President, the grandson of another, and the son of the Minister to Great Britain in the critical years of the Civil War. In his college days at Harvard two remarkable men influenced him most, one a scientist, the great Agassiz, and the other a critic, poet, and diplomatist, James Russell Lowell, with whom he read and talked. Adams's studies in history and law led him to Germany, then to Italy, where he met the liberator Garibaldi. A little later, as secretary to his father in London, he became acquainted with all the political and literary celebrities in the British capital; when his father's diplomatic sojourn was over, young Adams returned to Washington. For a few years he wrote for the "North American Review" and other magazines on political and historical themes, visited London again and while there was, to his surprise, offered an assistant professorship in History at Harvard. Resigning this position after seven years, he went back to Washington. There he was for many years one of a brilliant circle, observing, conversing, and recording in numerous periodical reviews his impressions of the moving social and political scene. His writings in the eighties include, besides an anonymous novel, *Democracy,* two biographies and a *History of the United States.* After the death of his accomplished wife, 1885, he traveled extensively in foreign lands. The last thirty years of Adams's life were mostly given to the study and interpretation of medieval architecture and art. The thirteenth-century windows of the cathedrals of northern France had a fascination for him, and his work on Mont-Saint-Michel and Chartres is a standard piece of esthetic appreciation. His other famous book, *The Education of Henry Adams,* was written by 1906, privately printed for his friends in 1907, but not published for general reading until 1918. Adams called his autobiography "a study of twentieth-century multiplicity" as opposed to

the "thirteenth-century unity" treated in his book on Saint-Michel and Chartres. *The Education of Henry Adams* is rather a personal treatise on theories of education and the philosophy of history than an autobiography proper, the conclusion being, so far as there is any, that all the systems of education Henry Adams knew were failures. But in spite of his indictment of the various phases of his education, Adams assures us that he immensely enjoyed the experience. The brilliant masterpiece of self-expression called *The Education of Henry Adams* is the record of a cultured man's high adventure among pure ideas, the subtle irony of which provokes the "laughter of the mind."

THE PROFESSOR REFUSES TO PROFESS *

WHILE at Wenlock,[1] he received a letter from President Eliot inviting him to take an Assistant Professorship of History, to be created shortly at Harvard College. After waiting ten or a dozen years for some one to show consciousness of his existence, even a *Terebratula*[2] would be pleased and grateful for a compliment which implied that the new President of Harvard College wanted his help; but Adams knew nothing about history, and much less about teaching, while he knew more than enough about Harvard College; and wrote at once to thank President Eliot, with much regret that the honor should be above his powers. His mind was full of other matters. The summer, from which he had expected only amusement and social relations with new people, had ended in the most intimate personal tragedy, and the most terrific political convulsion he had ever known or was likely to know.[3] He had failed in every object of his trip. The Quarterlies had refused his best essay. He had made no acquaintances and hardly picked up the old ones. He sailed from Liverpool, on September 1, to begin again where he had started two years before, but with no longer a hope of attaching himself to a President or a party or a press. He was a free lance and no other career stood in sight or mind. To that point education had brought him.

Yet he found, on reaching home, that he had not done quite so badly as he feared. His article on the Session in the July *North American* had made a success. Though he could not quite see what partisan object it served, he heard with flattered astonishment that it had been reprinted by the Democratic National Committee and circulated as a campaign document by the hundred thousand copies. He was henceforth in opposition, do what he might; and a Massa-

* The selections from Henry Adams are used by permission of, and by arrangement with, Houghton Mifflin Company.

[1] A town in Shropshire, England, the site of Wenlock Abbey.

[2] A living or fossil animal of the brachiopod family.

[3] Adams refers to his sister's death from lockjaw, and to the Franco-Prussian war of 1870.

chusetts Democrat, say what he pleased; while his only reward or return for this partisan service consisted in being formally answered by Senator Timothy Howe, of Wisconsin, in a Republican campaign document, presumed to be also freely circulated, in which the Senator, besides refuting his opinions, did him the honor—most unusual and picturesque in a Senator's rhetoric—of likening him to a begonia.

The begonia is, or then was, a plant of such senatorial qualities as to make the simile, in intention, most flattering. Far from charming in its refinement, the begonia was remarkable for curious and showy foliage; it was conspicuous; it seemed to have no useful purpose; and it insisted on standing always in the most prominent positions. Adams would have greatly liked to be a begonia in Washington, for this was rather his ideal of the successful statesman, and he thought about it still more when the *Westminster Review* for October brought him his article on the Gold Conspiracy, which was also instantly pirated on a great scale. Piratical he was himself henceforth driven to be, and he asked only to be pirated, for he was sure not to be paid; but the honors of piracy resemble the colors of the begonia; they are showy but not useful. Here was a *tour de force* he had never dreamed himself equal to performing: two long, dry, quarterly, thirty or forty page articles, appearing in quick succession, and pirated for audiences running well into the hundred thousands; and not one person, man or woman, offering him so much as a congratulation, except to call him a begonia.

Had this been all, life might have gone on very happily as before, but the ways of America to a young person of literary and political tastes were such as the so-called evolution of civilized man had not before evolved. No sooner had Adams made at Washington what he modestly hoped was a sufficient success, than his whole family set on him to drag him away. For the first time since 1861 his father interposed; his mother entreated; and his brother Charles argued and urged that he should come to Harvard College. Charles had views of further joint operations in a new field. He said that Henry had done at Washington all he could possibly do; that his position there wanted solidity; that he was, after all, an adventurer; that a few years in Cambridge would give him personal weight; that his chief function was not to be that of teacher, but that of editing the *North American Review* which was to be coupled with the professorship,

and would lead to the daily press. In short, that he needed the university more than the university needed him.

Henry knew the university well enough to know that the department of history was controlled by one of the most astute and ideal administrators in the world—Professor Gurney—and that it was Gurney who had established the new professorship, and had cast his net over Adams to carry the double load of mediæval history and the *Review*. He could see no relation whatever between himself and a professorship. He sought education; he did not sell it. He knew no history; he knew only a few historians; his ignorance was mischievous because it was literary, accidental, indifferent. On the other hand he knew Gurney, and felt much influenced by his advice. One cannot take one's self quite seriously in such matters; it could not much affect the sum of solar energies whether one went on dancing with girls in Washington, or began talking to boys at Cambridge. The good people who thought it did matter had a sort of right to guide. One could not reject their advice; still less disregard their wishes.

The sum of the matter was that Henry went out to Cambridge and had a few words with President Eliot which seemed to him almost as American as the talk about diplomacy with his father ten years before. "But, Mr. President," urged Adams, "I know nothing about Mediæval History." With the courteous manner and bland smile so familiar for the next generation of Americans, Mr. Eliot mildly but firmly replied, "If you will point out to me any one who knows more, Mr. Adams, I will appoint him." The answer was neither logical nor convincing, but Adams could not meet it without overstepping his privileges. He could not say that, under the circumstances, the appointment of any professor at all seemed to him unnecessary.

So, at twenty-four hours' notice, he broke his life in halves again in order to begin a new education, on lines he had not chosen, in subjects for which he cared less than nothing; in a place he did not love, and before a future which repelled. Thousands of men have to do the same thing, but his case was peculiar because he had no need to do it. He did it because his best and wisest friends urged it, and he never could make up his mind whether they were right or not. To him this kind of education was always false. For himself he had no doubts. He thought it a mistake; but his opinion did not prove

that it was one, since, in all probability, whatever he did would be more or less a mistake. He had reached cross-roads of education which all led astray. What he could gain at Harvard College he did not know, but in any case it was nothing he wanted . . .

Far back in childhood, among its earliest memories, Henry Adams could recall his first visit to Harvard College. He must have been nine years old when on one of the singularly gloomy winter afternoons which beguiled Cambridgeport, his mother drove him out to visit his aunt, Mrs. Everett. Edward Everett was then President of the college and lived in the old President's House on Harvard Square. The boy remembered the drawing-room, on the left of the hall door, in which Mrs. Everett received them. He remembered a marble greyhound in the corner. The house had an air of colonial self-respect that impressed even a nine-year-old child.

When Adams closed his interview with President Eliot, he asked the Bursar about his aunt's old drawing-room, for the house had been turned to base uses. The room and the deserted kitchen adjacent to it were to let. He took them. Above him, his brother Brooks, then a law student, had rooms, with a private staircase. Opposite was J. R. Dennett, a young instructor almost as literary as Adams himself, and more rebellious to conventions. Inquiry revealed a boarding-table, somewhere in the neighborhood, also supposed to be superior in its class. Chauncey Wright, Francis Wharton, Dennett, John Fiske, or their equivalents in learning and lecture, were seen there, among three or four law students like Brooks Adams. With these primitive arrangements, all of them had to be satisfied. The standard was below that of Washington, but it was, for the moment, the best.

For the next nine months the Assistant Professor had no time to waste on comforts or amusements. He exhausted all his strength in trying to keep one day ahead of his duties. Often the stint ran on, till night and sleep ran short. He could not stop to think whether he were doing the work rightly. He could not get it done to please him, rightly or wrongly, for he could never satisfy himself what to do.

The fault he had found with Harvard College as an undergraduate must have been more or less just, for the college was making a great effort to meet these self-criticisms, and had elected President Eliot in 1869 to carry out its reforms. Professor Gurney was one of the leading reformers, and had tried his hand on his own depart-

ment of History. The two full Professors of History—Torrey and Gurney, charming men both—could not cover the ground. Between Gurney's classical courses and Torrey's modern ones, lay a gap of a thousand years, which Adams was expected to fill. The students had already elected courses numbered 1, 2, and 3, without knowing what was to be taught or who was to teach. If their new professor had asked what idea was in their minds, they must have replied that nothing at all was in their minds, since their professor had nothing in his, and down to the moment he took his chair and looked his scholars in the face, he had given, as far as he could remember, an hour, more or less, to the Middle Ages.

Not that his ignorance troubled him! He knew enough to be ignorant. His course had led him through oceans of ignorance; he had tumbled from one ocean into another till he had learned to swim; but even to him education was a serious thing. A parent gives life, but as parent, gives no more. A murderer takes life, but his deed stops there. A teacher affects eternity; he can never tell where his influence stops. A teacher is expected to teach truth, and may perhaps flatter himself that he does so, if he stops with the alphabet or the multiplication table, as a mother teaches truth by making her child eat with a spoon; but morals are quite another truth and philosophy is more complex still. A teacher must either treat history as a catalogue, a record, a romance, or as an evolution; and whether he affirms or denies evolution, he falls into all the burning faggots of the pit. He makes of his scholars either priests or atheists, plutocrats or socialists, judges or anarchists, almost in spite of himself. In essence incoherent and immoral, history had either to be taught as such—or falsified.

Adams wanted to do neither. He had no theory of evolution to teach, and could not make the facts fit one. He had no fancy for telling agreeable tales to amuse sluggish-minded boys, in order to publish them afterwards as lectures. He could still less compel his students to learn the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle and the Venerable Bede by heart. He saw no relation whatever between his students and the Middle Ages unless it were the Church, and there the ground was particularly dangerous. He knew better than though he were a professional historian that the man who should solve the riddle of the Middle Ages and bring them into the line of evolution from past to present, would be a greater man than Lamarck or Linnæus;

but history had nowhere broken down so pitiably, or avowed itself so hopelessly bankrupt, as there. Since Gibbon, the spectacle was almost a scandal. History had lost even the sense of shame. It was a hundred years behind the experimental sciences. For all serious purpose, it was less instructive than Walter Scott and Alexandre Dumas.

All this was without offence to Sir Henry Maine, Tylor, McLennan, Buckle, Auguste Comte, and the various philosophers who, from time to time, stirred the scandal, and made it more scandalous. No doubt, a teacher might make some use of these writers or their theories; but Adams could fit them into no theory of his own. The college expected him to pass at least half his time in teaching the boys a few elementary dates and relations, that they might not be a disgrace to the university. This was formal; and he could frankly tell the boys that, provided they passed their examinations, they might get their facts where they liked, and use the teacher only for questions. The only privilege a student had that was worth his claiming, was that of talking to the professor, and the professor was bound to encourage it. His only difficulty on that side was to get them to talk at all. He had to devise schemes to find out what they were thinking about, and induce them to risk criticism from their fellows. Any large body of students stifles the student. No man can instruct more than half-a-dozen students at once. The whole problem of education is one of its cost in money.

The lecture system to classes of hundreds, which was very much that of the twelfth century, suited Adams not at all. Barred from philosophy and bored by facts, he wanted to teach his students something not wholly useless. The number of students whose minds were of an order above the average was, in his experience, barely one in ten; the rest could not be much stimulated by any inducements a teacher could suggest. All were respectable, and in seven years of contact, Adams never had cause to complain of one; but nine minds in ten take polish passively, like a hard surface; only the tenth sensibly reacts.

Adams thought that, as no one seemed to care what he did, he would try to cultivate this tenth mind, though necessarily at the expense of the other nine. He frankly acted on the rule that a teacher, who knew nothing of his subject, should not pretend to teach his scholars what he did not know, but should join them in trying to find the best way of learning it. The rather pretentious name of

historical method was sometimes given to this process of instruction, but the name smacked of German pedagogy, and a young professor who respected neither history nor method, and whose sole object of interest was his students' minds, fell into trouble enough without adding to it a German parentage.

The task was doomed to failure for a reason which he could not control. Nothing is easier than to teach historical method, but, when learned, it has little use. History is a tangled skein that one may take up at any point, and break when one has unravelled enough; but complexity precedes evolution. The *Pteraspis*[4] grins horribly from the closed entrance. One may not begin at the beginning, and one has but the loosest relative truths to follow up. Adams found himself obliged to force his material into some shape to which a method could be applied. He could think only of law as subject; the Law School as end; and he took, as victims of his experiment, half-a-dozen highly intelligent young men who seemed willing to work. The course began with the beginning, as far as the books showed a beginning in primitive man, and came down through the Salic Franks to the Norman English. Since no textbooks existed, the professor refused to profess, knowing no more than his students, and the students read what they pleased and compared their results. As pedagogy nothing could be more triumphant. The boys worked like rabbits, and dug holes all over the field of archaic society; no difficulty stopped them; unknown languages yielded before their attack, and customary law became familiar as the police court; undoubtedly they learned, after a fashion, to chase an idea, like a hare, through as dense a thicket of obscure facts as they were likely to meet at the bar; but their teacher knew from his own experience that his wonderful method led nowhere, and they would have to exert themselves to get rid of it in the Law School even more than they exerted themselves to acquire it in the college. Their science had no system, and could have none, since its subject was merely antiquarian. Try as hard as he might, the professor could not make it actual.

What was the use of training an active mind to waste its energy? The experiments might in time train Adams as a professor, but this result was still less to his taste. He wanted to help the boys to a career, but not one of his many devices to stimulate the intellectual

[4] A Paleozoic fish, used by Adams as a symbol of primitive force.

reaction of the student's mind satisfied either him or the students. For himself he was clear that the fault lay in the system, which could lead only to inertia. Such little knowledge of himself as he possessed warranted him in affirming that his mind required conflict, competition, contradiction even more than that of the student. He too wanted a rank-list to set his name upon. His reform of the system would have begun in the lecture-room at his own desk. He would have seated a rival assistant professor opposite him, whose business should be strictly limited to expressing opposite views. Nothing short of this would ever interest either the professor or the student; but of all university freaks, no irregularity shocked the intellectual atmosphere so much as contradiction or competition between teachers. In that respect the thirteenth-century system was worth the whole teaching of the modern school.

All his pretty efforts to create conflicts of thought among his students failed for want of system. None met the needs of instruction. In spite of President Eliot's reforms and his steady, generous, liberal support, the system remained costly, clumsy and futile. The university—as far as it was represented by Henry Adams—produced at great waste of time and money results not worth reaching.

He made use of his lost two years of German schooling to inflict their results on his students, and by a happy chance he was in the full tide of fashion. The Germans were crowning their new emperor at Versailles, and surrounding his head with a halo of Pepins and Merwigs, Othos and Barbarossas. James Bryce had even discovered the Holy Roman Empire. Germany was never so powerful, and the Assistant Professor of History had nothing else as his stock in trade. He imposed Germany on his scholars with a heavy hand. He was rejoiced; but he sometimes doubted whether they should be grateful. On the whole, he was content neither with what he had taught nor with the way he had taught it. The seven years he passed in teaching seemed to him lost.

The uses of adversity are beyond measure strange. As a professor, he regarded himself as a failure. Without false modesty he thought he knew what he meant. He had tried a great many experiments, and wholly succeeded in none. He had succumbed to the weight of the system. He had accomplished nothing that he tried to do. He regarded the system as wrong; more mischievous to the teachers than to the students; fallacious from the beginning to end. He quitted the

university at last, in 1877, with a feeling, that, if it had not been for the invariable courtesy and kindness shown by every one in it, from the President to the injured students, he should be sore at his failure.

These were his own feelings, but they seemed not to be felt in the college. With the same perplexing impartiality that had so much disconcerted him in his undergraduate days, the college insisted on expressing an opposite view. John Fiske went so far in his notice of the family in "Appleton's Cyclopedia," as to say that Henry had left a great reputation at Harvard College; which was a proof of John Fiske's personal regard that Adams heartily returned; and set the kind expression down to *camaraderie*. The case was different when President Eliot himself hinted that Adams's services merited recognition. Adams could have wept on his shoulder in hysterics, so grateful was he for the rare good-will that inspired the compliment; but he could not allow the college to think that he esteemed himself entitled to distinction. He knew better, and his was among the failures which were respectable enough to deserve self-respect. Yet nothing in the vanity of life struck him as more humiliating than that Harvard College, which he had persistently criticised, abused, abandoned, and neglected, should alone have offered him a dollar, an office, an encouragement, or a kindness. Harvard College might have its faults, but at least it redeemed America, since it was true to its own.

Bradford's "Damaged Souls"

The most distinguished writer of psychological biography in America is Gamaliel Bradford (1863–), direct descendant of Governor William Bradford of the Plymouth Colony. Compelled by ill-health to forego a formal college education, he devoted himself privately to an immense range of historical and literary study. He has lived in imagination with a multitude of characters whom his vast reading has made as familiar as actual companions. In 1895 Bradford published a book of essays, *Types of American Character,* and since then he has been a frequent contributor of poems and biographical sketches to leading magazines which have subsequently appeared in book form. After the publication in 1912 of his volume, *Lee the American,* began the series of shorter studies which have made him famous as a psycho-analytic interpreter of individuals: *Confederate Portraits, Union Portraits, Portraits of Women, Damaged Souls,* and others. There followed several more extended portrayals, such as *The Soul of Samuel Pepys, Darwin,* and the evangelist *Moody,* persons of very different temper, each of whom he has subjected to a searching and sympathetic analysis. Without prejudice, and almost without irony, Bradford is a dispassionate searcher of souls. His style, resembling in clarity and distinction that of Sainte-Beuve whom he admires, is more engagingly human than the French critic's. As if crowning his rich and varied contribution to his portrait-gallery of worthies and unworthies, Bradford added in 1929 a charming volume of personal confessions, *Life and I: An Autobiography of Humanity,* the subtitle of which makes him one with the rest of us. In a suggestive essay, "The Art of Biography," written in 1925, he had said: "But, easy or difficult, the biographer's one object is to catch something of the fluidity, the mobility, the versatility of the human spirit. And thus biography is one of the most fascinating of all pursuits, for by it we are taken out of our own lives into another life which we find is after all very much our own." This method of presentation, which is at bottom a vicarious process,

Bradford has named psychography, as already explained in the introduction to this volume. He is not only a psychographer, a soul-painter, but also an interpreter of the art of the biographer. As the outstanding specialist in America of his subject, he has shown himself a kindly philosopher, and the inspirer of those who study, teach, and practise, in one way or another, the ancient art of life-writing. The following selection on the career and character of Aaron Burr is a perfect illustration of Bradford's penetrating analysis.

A DAMAGED SOUL*

(Aaron Burr)

I

He was a man who came into the world to amuse himself, and he early conceived that the richest sources of masculine amusement are the love of women and the domination of men. Perhaps he was right; but it is impossible to deny the justice of John Quincy Adams's grave comment: "Burr's life, take it altogether, was such as in any country of sound morals his friends would be desirous of burying in profound oblivion."

You may regard his career, even more than most, as a series of big and little losses. He was born in 1756. With Jonathan Edwards as his grandfather and the president of Princeton College as his father, he might seem to have inherited an almost suffocating odor of sanctity; but he soon lost it. He lost his parents in early childhood, and he was brought up under what his Edwards uncle regretfully called "a maple-sugar government." As a mere boy, he went with Arnold to Quebec, and followed this with other military distinction; but he lost his health and the favor of Washington and with these the chance of becoming a great soldier. He practised law successfully, but was drawn into politics and showed a wonderful gift for the seamy side of them. He lost the presidency in 1801 by a tie-vote with Jefferson and was thus shifted into that graveyard of greater hopes, the vice-presidency. He lost the governorship of New York, chiefly through the activity of his constant opponent Hamilton. Whereupon he fought and killed Hamilton and by so doing lost the respect of most respectable people. He then schemed to create an empire in the southwest by robbing and possibly ruining his own country. He lost this vast dream hope, and though he was acquitted of treason in a famous trial, he lost what public confidence had been left to him. Money he was always losing, by extravagance, by gener-

* The selection from Gamaliel Bradford is used by permission of, and by arrangement with, Houghton Mifflin Company.

osity, by indifference, by windy speculation. He spent four years, from 1808 to 1812, in the most disreputable Bohemian exile in Europe, and at length crept home. Long before, he had lost a charming and beloved wife. He now lost his grandson, whom he worshiped, and the exquisite daughter, who worshiped him. It might seem as if he had nothing left to lose. But he kept on for twenty-five years longer, losing what little trifles life could still take from him. At the very end he married a rich widow and lost first her money and then her affection. And before his death, in 1836, he lost even the use of his limbs. Yet in this crowding, mountainous accumulation of losses, he rarely lost his patience, and never that heaven-bestowed gift of amusing himself.

Through all these busy and tumultuous years Burr loved humanity, all humanity, men, women, and children, and they loved him, especially the women. I have no desire to take up dusty gossip and forgotten scandal; but to understand such a soul as Burr's, a large analysis of his relations with women is absolutely necessary. Among the various classes of great lovers it is easy to pick out certain types to which Burr did not belong. He had nothing to do with the melancholy, world-weary type, jaded with indiscriminate satiety and restlessly indifferent to anything but the tormenting satisfaction of unappeasable desire, the type which has been so fully and admirably dissected—and illustrated—by Sainte-Beuve. "He experienced the incurable disgust for all things which is peculiar to those who have abused the sources of life," would be ludicrously inept as a description of Burr.

Nor was he a longing, absorbed, soul-devouring, romantic lover. I do not believe he ever lost a night's sleep or a day's work in vainly dreaming of a woman. The supreme line which expresses such a state of mind,

> "I was not, save it were a thought of thee,"

would have been meaningless to him, and his daughter brands the romantic as something "which, thanks to my father on earth, I am long past."

Again, though here some critics would differ, I am convinced that Burr did not belong to the group of the bitter, cynical lovers, the Lovelace class, who pursue from vanity and conquer with contempt,

blighting virtue and innocence merely to prove that they have no existence. Burr had a naïve vanity which led him to take a considerable satisfaction in his popularity with women. But it seems solidly proved that he did not boast of individual triumphs: and, while we can never place implicit trust in the many verbal statements that are attributed to him, I believe that in a general way and with reasonable allowances, there was truth, at least of intention, in the remark: "Nor did I ever do, or say, or write anything which threw a cloud over a woman's name."

In short, however indiscriminate and disreputable were Burr's amours, there seems to have been nothing perverse or abnormal about them. His pleasure in his relations with women was mainly part of the entertainment he derived at all times from the society of his fellow human beings. The sting of sex added a peculiar and enchanting piquancy; but the entertainment was general and inexhaustible. He liked people, liked to be with them, and to watch them, and to talk to them. His manner was always dignified and not obtrusively or aggressively sympathetic. His admirers compared his social ease as well as his morals with those of Chesterfield, and he liked to have them do so. But he was infinitely more genuine than Chesterfield, simpler and far more lovable. In many respects he recalls that creature of vast and abounding humanity, the elder Dumas. He had a passion for a sort of superficial mystery, as a child has. But in fact he was candid. If he said different things at different times, it was because he felt different things. And at all times he entered into the lives of others, laughed with them, played with them, wept with them: "You, who can so well and so singularly bring home to yourself the feelings of others, and adopt them when they are quite strange to you," said his daughter admirably. Above all, he had the delightful gift of making others' amusement his own, and his is the charming and perfectly human phrase, "It is a luxury to see people happy."

His attraction for grown men was undeniable and was exercised all over the world. He made innumerable devoted friends of all sorts, friends who were loyal to him and faced great sacrifices for him. From the strange vicissitudes of his life, and, alas, from his own fundamental selfishness, he lost most of them; but he found it incredibly easy to make others. "Every variety of man," says Mr. Oliver, "rich and poor, old and young, honest citizen or reckless

outlaw, every casual acquaintance and simple wayfarer, is won with the same magic. They like him because they believe that he likes them and understands them, which there is little doubt he did." This may be somewhat exaggerated and requires correction by Mr. Lodge's harsh remark that Burr possessed "what women and young men call 'fascination.'" But of the two I think Mr. Oliver is nearer the truth.

And if Burr attracted men, it is certain that he was even more attractive to children, and again because he evidently loved them. The truth is that, like Dumas, he was in many respects a child himself, though sometimes a rather sophisticated one; and he was always ready to leave the great matters of the world to romp and frolic with congenial playmates. "As for children," says Mr. Oliver again, "they followed him as if he had been the Pied Piper of Hamelin." Burr's letters and journals are full of bits showing this pure and kindly sympathy with the childish heart. How pretty is his account of the little German girl, six years old, with the guitar, whom he snubs: "To be sure, I did give her a gooden groshen, which was probably much more than she expected; but I was unkind. One minute after I was sorry, and sent for her, but she was not to be found; and I have been all day looking out for her in vain."

This tender regard for children is everywhere obvious in Burr's own domestic affairs. His daughter Theodosia was one of the great delights and interests of his life. He devoted much care and thought to her education and sought to give her an intellectual training far different from what fell to most of the women of her time. She did him credit in every way; for she was admired and beloved, not only for her beauty, but for her character, by all who came into contact with her. Even those, like Blennerhassett, who had suffered by her father's vagaries, did not allow their grudge against him to affect their adoration for her. Burr's letters to her show him at his best and are full of practical and moral advice most excellent in quality, if a little surprising from such a source. He prides himself upon his influence over her, which was undoubtedly great; but she was the stronger nature and it is probable that she had even more influence over him. When she married the wealthy South Carolinian, Joseph Allston, her only son, Burr's namesake, became almost as much an object of affection and solicitude as the mother was.

If Burr was fond of his daughter, it was partly because she re-

sembled her mother, and as a husband he is no less attractive than as a father. The marriage was one of affection. The elder Theodosia was older than her husband, and was neither rich nor strikingly handsome. Burr was attached to her because he appreciated the singular grace, dignity, and elevation of her character and mind, and all his life he spoke with reverence of her charm and of the value of her influence upon him. Yet it is notable that her loss, when he was well under forty, seems to have made no very profound impression, and still more notable is the difference in tone between her letters and his. His are affectionate, considerate, thoughtful, helpful. Hers have a rare and high intensity of passion which he never knew. She says in simple, pregnant words of one of his: "How is it possible you had nothing more to write? I know the head may be exhausted, but I was in hopes the heart never could."

In fact, Burr's love for his wife was only part of his love for all her sex. And it must at once be recognized that this love did not stop short of unlimited licentiousness. As a subject for the psychoanalysts Burr must be singularly fruitful. Even the plain old-fashioned psychologist must regard him with a considerable amount of interest. His biographers proclaim a touching confidence in his marital fidelity. As Ariosto says of his heroine in a similar connection: "It may be true, but it is extremely improbable." Parton, endeavouring to contradict Davis, who would have saved his hero's political character at the expense of his moral, even insists that Burr was virtuous before his marriage. But Parton had not seen the unedited version of Burr's Journal. Any one who has read that ingenuous document, even though it deals with later life, does not find it difficult to believe the stories as to Jacataqua, the Indian girl, on the march to Quebec, as to Margaret Moncrieffe, or any other stories. It is not necessary or possible to emphasize this utterly dissolute side of Burr's character further than to point out that he seems to have had no idea of moral scruple in such matters. Indeed, his entire absence of compunction gives his dealings a singularly demoralizing charm, which is suggestive of Sterne; and I wish I could embellish these decorous pages with the gay adventure of the fair Madame D. in the crowded inn at Rotterdam, an adventure which seems to have danced airily right out of the last chapter of "A Sentimental Journey."

The curious thing is that his wild illicit relations did not, as is so often the case, destroy or diminish Burr's perfectly innocent pleasure

in the society of virtuous persons of the other sex. In all his eighty years he never made the ghastly discovery that a pretty woman can be a bore. He would meet a charming stranger, chat and flirt with her for an hour, kiss her hand respectfully, sigh over her departure, forget her, and be ready for the next. He would at once have acknowledged the significance of the words of Pepys: "Which is a strange slavery that I stand in to beauty, that I value nothing near it." All fashions and all types suited him. The plump, the thin, the dark, the fair, the gay, the grave, even the plain, so they were merry, or witty, or tender, or tantalizing—all alike had a fascination for him.

And as he found all women attractive, so they responded with an almost unanimous cordiality. One cannot say what the secret was; one seldom can in these cases. He was not strikingly handsome, though his courtly and gracious manners, his sympathetic voice, and his intense, quick eyes may have helped. The solution was just the plain old one of Victor Hugo's verses:

"Comment, disaient ils,
Enchanter les belles
Sans philtres subtils?
Aimer, disaient elles."

Burr liked women, and women liked him: that was all there was to it. The gay loved him to laugh with him, the pious to reform him, both with the same ardor, though not with the same success. When he met a siren, he asked kisses, when he visited a convent, he asked prayers. Prayers and kisses alike were accorded with celerity and accepted with gratitude.

What Burr's fundamental opinion of women was, is not easy to ascertain. He was not a brooding analyst of himself or of others, and no doubt he preferred to enjoy rather than to explain. He often puts himself forward as the defender of their intelligence and he remonstrated against the shallow education which was all that most women of that day received. At the same time, like many wide lovers, he does not seem to have been generally inclined to submit the practical conduct of his life to their influence, and I suspect that in the depths of his heart he regarded them as the most amusing toys in an amusing world. When one of them asked him, "But,

Colonel, have ladies no sense then?" his gentle answer was, *"All* sense, madame; yet it is better to talk sweet little nothings to them."

Whatever he thought of them, they played a huge part in his life. If we can believe Parton—alas, so often we cannot—his very last faintly whispered dying word was "Madame." And after his poverty-stricken death the monument which his careless and indifferent executors had neglected to place over his grave was set up in the anonymity of night by the orders of a woman who had loved him.

II

Thus we have established that Burr was a man who adored women. If it be thought that this is incompatible with a life of strenuous activity and at least attempted achievement, we should remember Mirabeau, who adored women, but snatched time from them to make over his country, and Mohammed, who adored women, but snatched time from them to make over the world. I have dealt thus largely, in beginning, with the element of feminine amusement in Burr's life, because I believe that, though he owed his place in American history to far other pursuits, the key of amusement is just as important in interpreting these as in understanding his lighter hours. The efforts of practical life, and he was capable of mighty ones, were to him, not stages in an ideal structure of vast achievement, but mere diversions, like the kiss of a girl, and hardly more engaging.

Nevertheless, he did great things, and was closely entangled in far greater. In his youth the Revolution made him think that the highest of human amusements would be to be a soldier, and he bade fair to be a brave, discreet, far-seeing, and successful one. He made his little, frail body iron, by stern temperance, discipline, and self-control. Indeed, he was always temperate in food and drink. He made his soldiers work, fight, and love him. I think perhaps the greatest amusement, and certainly the noblest, of his life was bearing the body of his dead general Montgomery off the field, in the blinding snow, with the British guns threatening to bring him down at every moment. But over-exertion and health tried beyond all reason cut off this career too soon.

Then there was law, a fascinating, stimulating, absorbing amusement. And there was work in it, no doubt, enormous work. But the

work might be made amusing also, especially when it led to a brilliant triumph. Even Burr's admirers do not insist that he was a profound or philosophical lawyer. His respect for the profession is indicated in his cynical comment on law as "whatever is boldly asserted and plausibly maintained." But he worked hard, his energy and his industry were as intelligently directed as they were untiring, and it is remarkable that law is the one phase of his career in which he did not lose. It is even said that he never lost a case in which he was engaged alone. Well would it have been for him, had he stuck to law altogether, and not abandoned it for other forms of amusement, perhaps no more diverting and at any rate less profitable.

Unfortunately the fascination of politics, so baneful to the lawyer in a democratic government, soon drew him into its snare. For a certain kind of political career Burr was admirably fitted. He was not troubled with an excess of moral scruple, and if the phrase, "Great souls care little for small morals," was not correctly attributed to him, it might have been. He was an able organizer, or at any rate manipulator. And he was a cunning and a mighty adept in the art of moulding and kneading the souls of men. What his power in this way was may be well indicated by his singular and impressive account of what on one occasion happened to himself. "From any man, save one, if I cannot vanquish, I can escape. In the hands of that one, I am just what Theodosia is in mine. This was perceived after the first two hours; and seeing no retreat, nor anything better to be done, I surrendered, tame and unresisting, to be disarmed, stripped, hacked, hewed, dissected, skinned, turned inside out, at the will and mercy of the operator." The treatment he experienced in this case seems to be about what he applied at different times to scores of others.

Yet the gifts were unavailing. It would be impossible to analyze here the complex tangle of Burr's political life. Suffice it to say that after fifteen years of it he came out in 1805 completely and generally discredited and distrusted by all parties alike. In 1801 he lost the presidency by the tie with Jefferson. In 1804 he was defeated in the contest for the New York governorship, then almost as great an office as the presidency.Through all these political struggles the chief obstacle to Burr's success was the bitter and increasing antagonism of Hamilton, founded partly on personal jealousy but mainly on a deep and well-grounded belief in Burr's dangerous and unscrupulous

ambition. In the spring of 1804 the rivalry between the two grew so fierce that Burr determined to end it by mortal combat, for which Hamilton himself admitted that he had given excuse; and Hamilton's most brilliant biographer says of Burr's challenge: "Few gentlemen have ever sent a friend with a message upon more substantial provocation." The duel took place on the eleventh of July, and was conducted properly according to the etiquette of such affairs. Burr fired to kill and inflicted a mortal wound. Probably Hamilton discharged his pistol with a convulsive pressure, as he was struck; but the bullet flew far wide of his adversary. On that July morning on the Heights of Weehawken Burr tossed his future in the air and shot it to pieces like a glass pigeon, just from a whim of spite, or was it really from a notion of honor? Either way, it was thoroughly characteristic of the man.

Only a very brief time after the duel was required to show Burr that, however it might be judged as a matter of morals, it was ruinous as a matter of policy. A howl of horror rose from the Federalists and from nearly all decent people; and Burr was obliged practically to seclude himself for a time. Indeed, his situation was almost desperate, and he knew it was, and had intense, if brief, periods of dejection. Yet in these months of wandering and distress his letters to Theodosia show no regret, but constantly his singular power of amusing himself, and I am not aware of any sign of remorse for Hamilton's death, unless the remark in later years, "If I had read Sterne more and Voltaire less, I should have known that the world was wide enough for Hamilton and me."

By the autumn of 1804, however, things had quieted down sufficiently for Burr to resume his vice-presidential place in the Senate. Many people dreaded and avoided him, but no one cared to attack him; and his extraordinary fascination was as widely exerted as ever. He presided with dignity and impartiality at the impeachment of Judge Chase, and on the second of March, 1805, he delivered a farewell address. It was a noble, a dignified, a perfectly appropriate speech and contained the striking and possibly prophetic words so often quoted: "If the Constitution be destined ever to perish by the sacrilegious hands of the demagogue or the usurper, which God avert, its expiring agonies will be witnessed on this floor." I can well imagine Dumas making just such a speech, with entire solemnity and real feeling. But the sentence that impresses me most is one that

would not have been preserved to us except for the record of John Quincy Adams, who watched the whole ceremony with profound attention. Burr enjoins upon Senators the importance of adhering to their regular rules of order; for, he says, "on full investigation it will be discovered that there is scarce a departure from order but leads to or is indissolubly connected with a departure from morality." Think of these words, from Aaron Burr, who cared just as much for morality as he did for order! And is it not a delightful bit of humor that the passage should have been handed down by Adams, poor, gaunt-souled John Quincy Adams, eaten up by conscience, who had never known an hour of amusement in his whole life? Adams and Burr!

Within two years this ardent eulogist of order and morality was busily conspiring against the peace, if not the existence, of his country, whose dying agonies he was content to leave for exhibition on the floor of the Senate, or anywhere else. The snarl of efforts and accusations and individualities and passions involved in the Burr Conspiracy is too intricate to be elucidated in a brief portrait, if it can be elucidated at all. Henry Adams's narrative shows Burr directly aiming to break up the Union. Dr. McCaleb would have us believe that this was all a pretense, that the enthusiastic loyalty of the West would have made such an attempt ludicrous, and that Burr's designs were directed only against Spain, with the whole West in entire sympathy. Even the plain facts are exceedingly difficult to get at. But it is certain that during 1805 and 1806 Burr studied the western country carefully, attached to himself a considerable number of adherents, conspicuous among whom were the deluding Wilkinson and the deluded Blennerhassett, and even, at any rate as a matter of friendship, Andrew Jackson and Henry Clay, provided himself with a decent excuse in the purchase of a tract of land for ostensible settlement, and in the autumn of 1806 set out with a handful of followers to descend the Mississippi toward New Orleans, and accomplish—something; what, we shall never know. Twice he was hindered on his way by the authorities, was tried and triumphantly acquitted. But at last the government was so thoroughly aroused that he found it expedient to leave his followers and attempt to make his escape. The attempt failed, and he was arrested and taken to Richmond to be tried for treason.

Through all this parti-colored Odyssey what Burr really planned

to accomplish still remains obscure. Probably it was obscure even to himself. I have already pointed out that he had a certain childlike love of mystery, which showed in a taste for enveloping even simple matters in cipher. His celebrated cipher letter to Wilkinson has a flavor of comic opera, though it deals with life and death. In short, he was a conspirator, as Mr. Lodge suggests, rather than a statesman, and great undertakings are not built on conspiracy. From all the conflicting and concurring pieces of evidence we gather that he dreamed of a cloudy empire, founded on the ruins of Spanish power in the Southwest, an empire that should give modern progress and civilization to those oppressed people and incidentally a glittering throne to himself, to be transmitted by inheritance to his daughter. If this seems utterly fantastic, we must remember that Napoleon was then at the top of his success, with no shadow of approaching overthrow, and that scores of military adventurers like Burr were stimulated by his example. What moves me more than all the elaborate legal testimony is one brief phrase of Theodosia's, which shows the hopes and dreams and schemes the two had talked over together. Writing later to her father in Europe, she says of difficulties affecting Mexico: "It is generally believed that we shall have trouble very soon. Thank God I am not near my subjects; all my care and real tenderness might be forgotten in the strife." It is these little touches that betray the secrets of the heart.

What chiefly wrecked Burr's Mexican scheme was the lack of money. He begged, he borrowed, he inveigled and plundered rich fools like Blennerhassett, he had the delightful audacity to ask the Spanish government for money to destroy itself. All was to no purpose. What he got was pitiful, and even that slipped through his fingers. Money always slipped through his fingers: it was the tragedy of his life, except that he made it a comedy. He was often accused of dishonesty, and as he refused to justify himself—he never would justify himself—the accusation stuck. Perhaps he deserved it, indirectly at any rate. But the chief trouble was an utter incapacity for dealing with money at all. He had a good gift at earning. He had an enormous gift at spending. He liked to spend for himself. He liked to spend for others, regardlessly, indiscriminately. Any beggar could fool him. "I never buy a bit of furniture or take the smallest trip without being duped and plundered; and, when it is past, I console myself with the experience I have gained, and the full assurance that

it is the very last time; and this has gone on pretty much the same way near forty years." He liked speculation of all sorts, liked to make cloud fortunes, and squander them generously and recklessly. Was there ever a prettier picture of milkmaid's happiness than this? "Now if I can get a passport to Bremen and Amsterdam," he writes to his daughter at a later period, "I will send you a million of francs within six months; but one half of it must be laid out in pretty things. Oh! what beautiful things I will send you. . . . Home at ten, and have been casting up my millions and spending it. Lord, how many people I have made happy."

So, in casting up his millions and spending them and making people happy and inventing huge visionary amusement, he landed himself in Richmond and was being tried for his life. The trial was an immense spectacle; but it was a farce. Everybody, from the chief justice to the slightest witness and the prisoner himself, seemed to be thinking of something besides his guilt or innocence. All the same, the ignominy of it set the stamp upon his terrible failure. He had failed in politics, he had failed in the conception of empire, simply because he was not big enough, because he did not take life or death or other men or his own ambition seriously enough. Perhaps, after all he was quite as happy. He had the temperament of happiness. Even in destruction and disaster there were elements of amusement, if you knew how to look for them. Theodosia writes of her stay in Richmond during the trial: "Indeed, my father, so far from accepting of sympathy, has continually animated all around him. . . . Since my residence here, of which some days and a night were passed in the penitentiary, our little family circle has been a scene of uninterrupted gayety."

And this was the man who so narrowly missed being president of the United States. We do not know what sort of a president he would have been; but we do know something of what, as vice-president, he was. And there is always that sentence in the farewell to the Senate: "On full investigation it will be discovered that there is scarce a departure from order but leads to or is indissolubly connected with a departure from morality." A grave sentence, an admirable sentence; but coming from those lips, it too much recalls the old adage about Satan reproving sin.

O Aaron Burr, O Aaron Burr, you amused yourself and you were the cause of endless amusement—and misery—in others.

III

After being formally acquitted of treason and even of misdemeanor, Burr sailed for Europe in 1808, partly because his enemies and his creditors made America unpleasant and partly in the shadowy hope of furthering his Mexican schemes. He was received at first fairly well in England and Scotland and had agreeable social relations. But the government soon became suspicious of him, and he was driven into a forlorn exile over the northern part of the continent. The record of his four years' wandering is contained in his singular Journal. And it ought to be a record of despair. Not only had he left great hope behind him, not only had the wealth and glory and power he had dreamed of utterly faded away, while all he loved was separated from him by a thousand leagues of barren sea. But he was beset with every sort of petty trial and discomfort. He knocked in vain at the portals of the great, or shivered in their antechambers and endured the insults of their lackeys, soliciting aid or favor or even tolerance. He had spells of sickness, of sheer physical exhaustion, with nobody to tend him. He was forced to tramp the streets when "my legs refused their office; my knees trembled, and my head became dizzy, so that I was each moment in danger of falling and being run over." He endured discomforts of cold, discomforts of heat, discomforts of wet and filth and vermin. He was utterly, wretchedly poor, so that he was often near his last penny, forced to borrow of servants and casual acquaintance, forced to sell the petty and treasured remembrances of brighter days. He writes to Theodosia: "So, after turning it over, and looking at it, and opening it, and putting it to my ear like a baby, and kissing it, and begging you a thousand pardons out loud, your dear, little beautiful watch was—was sold."

Well, in spite of this hideous accumulation of great and little miseries—the little so often harder to endure—the record is not one of despair at all. There are moments of depression, perhaps more intense for their rarity, but in the main there is a sunny, infectious cheerfulness, which is quite irresistible. And this cheerfulness is not stoical, is not a matter of discipline and theory. No doubt Burr's theory supported his practice; but the practice was constitutional and did not require any theory whatever. There is no regret for the past, hardly even a thought of it. There is occasional preoccupation with

the future, but not often to the point of anxiety. There is always recognition of the golden sufficiency of the present, and the wisdom of making the most of it by keeping one's thoughts outside of one's self.

And note that the ordinary greater spiritual consolations and resources are not so much what Burr depends upon. He was never an absorbed or arduous thinker, and did not divert himself with the problems of philosophy. He read widely, but at this time mainly current matter of the day. He took little interest in art, though his quick susceptibility responded to it for the moment. He says that he could spend a month looking at paintings, but I do not observe that he often spends an hour, and one of the few that he describes in detail is the likeness of a lady in decided undress. When he hears a concert, he is more interested in the audience than in the music; and the natural world, also, is little more than a background for humanity. As to religion, it is hardly to be supposed that he looked to it for comfort. In his youth he threw off inherited Calvinism once for all. In his age he spoke of the Bible with respect, but nothing suggests a daily perusal. He manifested a good deal of confidence that he would be vindicated in heaven from the few sins which he had not committed on earth and from which he had been too proud or too lazy to vindicate himself. In general, his attitude is that of a polite acquaintance with God, such as he maintained with all gentlemen, but of no particular intimacy. I don't know what can better sum up his religion than his delightful remark: "I think that God is a great deal better than people suppose."

But he did not need these greater and more remote means of spiritual support, because the mere casual amusement of every day and hour was enough. He lived on the surface of his own soul, and the bright, varied, shifting, scintillating surface of life afforded him inexhaustible diversion. When he was cold and half-sick and poverty-stricken indoors, he could go to a theatre on the boulevards and laugh and cry like a forgetful child. He could walk in the fields on a sunny morning and meet a gay company of peasants and chat with them and take part in their simple sports and make them think he was as gentle and innocent as they were—and in a sense he was. Or, if he had to take a long dark ride in a crowded coach, with the wind chilling and the rain beating, he could wrap himself in his cloak,

and snuggle up for warmth against the stout farmer beside him, and smile, and fall asleep.

And the inward cheerfulness was reflected in an outward kindness and courtesy, which won hearts even if it could not keep heads. He was ready to receive favors, and when he could, to return them, to give money, when he had it, and to give smiles, which he always had. His hope was no greater than his benevolence, which was extraordinary, considering his evanescent means; often no doubt indiscreet and foolish, but immensely attractive. Could there be anything prettier than the story of the halfpence? "Have left in cash two halfpence, which is much better than *one* penny, because they jingle, and thus one may refresh one's self with the music." Yet a little later he finds himself penniless, "for I had given my two halfpence to Gonin's little girl."

Then there are the women, women innumerable, unfailing, and amusing always. There is that strange multiplicity of indiscriminate street adventures, which are saved from utter sordidness only by the grace and sunshine of his spirit. On a higher level there are such entanglements as that with Madame de Reizenstein, and the escape from her, described with such picturesque vividness: "Felicitate me, my dear, on my escape from the most critical danger of my life. . . . I do really believe that de Reizenstein is a sorceress. Indeed, I have no doubt of it; and, if I were president of the Secret Tribunal, she should be burned alive tomorrow. Another interview, and I might have been lost; my hopes and projects blasted and abandoned. The horror of this last of catastrophes struck me so forcibly, and the danger was so imminent, that at eight o'clock I ordered posthorses; gave a crown extra to the postillion to drive like the devil, and lo! here I am in a warm room, near a neat, good bed, safely locked within the walls of Erfurth, rejoicing and repining." But with high and low, rich and poor, virtuous and sordid, there is the same cordiality, the same gayety, the same lavish waste of limited means, and the same easy oblivion. "Four francs for a prostitute and brandy; two for benevolence." There you have Aaron Burr—at fifty-five.

The Journal which contains all these edifying bits is a curious production. Professor Channing calls it "the most disgraceful journal in existence." To lovers of Pepys this must seem rather strong. At the same time, though Pepys is more luxuriant in detail, Burr distinctly

excels in the complete absence of that conscience which was always teasing and towsling and tormenting poor Pepys, after his indecorous excesses. In other respects the diaries oddly resemble each other. Both are broken, frank, direct, almost incoherent notes of the day's intimate experiences, without any attempt at literary finish, Burr indeed taking pains to emphasize that he is merely making jotted memoranda for future use. Both show that singular and unexpected yet intensely human disposition to disguise misdoing under a veil of polyglot shyness, and in both the use of foreign languages is as careless as it is chaotic. Only, a slight study of Burr is sufficient to convince one of the supreme genius of Pepys in the distinctive analysis of his own soul.

The strangest, most inexplicable thing about Burr's Journal is that it was explicitly and solely intended for Theodosia's reading. Biographers have tried to make out that she was to have an expurgated duplicate, but the evidence of the diary itself tends to disprove this assertion. The only possible way to explain the difficulty is to remember Burr's extraordinary, childlike, Dumas-like candor, and the peculiar independence of Theodosia's bringing up; but even so, the problem is troublesome enough. At any rate, the existence of the Journal shows what an immense place the daughter occupied in her father's heart; and it serves to remind us that during these terrible European years he had at least the vision of her and of an old age passed in her company. What that company was, what an influence her intense fragility and beautiful, noble courage had on a nature so difficult to influence is obvious everywhere in the many letters she wrote him, letters which show a character subtler, stronger, more framed to fill a great place in the world than his. And yet, as so often happens, the very strength of the higher nature showed itself in an adoration of the lower which is almost overwhelming in its passionate ardor: "Often, after reflecting on this subject, you appear to me so superior, so elevated above all other men; I contemplate you with such a strange mixture of humility, admiration, reverence, love, and pride, that very little superstition would be necessary to make me worship you as a superior being; such enthusiasm does your character excite in me." The eternal tragedy of deluded affection has no more pathetic victims than Margaret Arnold and Theodosia Burr, and with what scorn they would both have resented the word!

So, when Burr, in 1812, finally succeeded in slinking home from

Europe, he had at least this affection and that of his grandchild to look forward to. Then the hope was blighted by sudden and overwhelming disaster. A few weeks after Burr landed in New York his grandchild died. This blow was serious enough; it completely prostrated Theodosia. But at least she and her father could be together. On the last day but one of 1812 she sailed from Charleston for New York, and was never heard of again.

It seemed as if life could hold no more wretchedness. Even Burr's serenity was shaken for a time, and he admitted in despair that he "felt severed from the human race." Yet the wonderful elasticity of that wonderful spirit brought him up again, and for twenty-five years he lived on in New York, presumably very much the life that he had lived before. He was shunned by society and coldly regarded by other members of his profession; yet he practised law with the same old vital vigor and with notable success. His immense physical activity continued almost to the end; and, in the main, the cheerfulness, the kindly interest in people about him, the endless faculty of finding and imparting amusement persisted, unimpaired. Also, his wild and unrestrained dealings with money increased, if possible. He was always hopelessly in debt. He had found out long before that "this 'giving' is a very unprofitable business, and I have twenty times determined to quit it, yet am perpetually 'seduced into the perpetration of it.' " He gave right and left, whenever he had anything to give, without discrimination and without regret.

And when he was seventy-seven, he married. The affair was as picturesque as everything else about him. The lady, Madame Jumel, who was rich and by no means young, had some natural hesitation. Burr laughingly told her that he would come on a certain day with a clergyman, prepared for business. The day came, and Burr, and the clergyman, the same who had married him to Theodosia fifty years before. The lady yielded and the marriage took place. But, alas, the conjugal felicity lasted little longer than the wooing, and the wife soon left the husband to his old, congenial, discreditable solitude.

There is little more to the strange story: paralysis shattering the body, but not great or grave enough to perturb the dauntless spirit, and the self-forgetful care of a woman who was willing to face slander and obloquy to ease the last days of her father's old friend. On the fourteenth of September, 1836, Aaron Burr died.

Apparently he had little fear of death, by steel, or bullet, or disease.

When a lady was complaining to him that some misery would kill her, he said, "Well, die then, madame: we must all die; but, bless me, die game." He died game. When he was in Paris, he thought he had been poisoned, and remembered the fate of a friend, who "having taken a dose of medicine, some time after drank a glass of cold water, and in an hour was dead. It seemed to me that I was about to follow his example; and, being in good company, and feeling no pain, there could not be a more charming occasion for an exit. I became very gay, and F. said I was never *si aimable.*" In his last illness a reverend gentleman asked him as to his hope of salvation through Christ. He replied that "on that subject he was coy." Is not the phrase admirably characteristic of the man, so that you feel sure you have his very words? And is it not delicious? He replied that on that subject he was coy. Shouldn't you think he might have been? He had murdered his rival, conspired against his country, deserted his followers, robbed his friends, made a plaything of female virtue; and really one shudders to think where he must have gone to. Yet he had done it all in the most amiable spirit. "Revenge, you know," he says, "is not in my nature." And he referred casually in company to his great adversary as "my friend Hamilton, whom I shot." Wherever he went, it is difficult to think of him as not enjoying himself, and one is constantly reminded of the charming remark of Fowler in "The Witty Fair One," [1] when he believes he is in hell: "If I be dead, I am in a world very like the other. I will get myself a female spirit to converse withal, and kiss, and be merry, and imagine myself alive again."

Once more I recur to that inimitable sentence in the Senate speech: "On full investigation it will be discovered that there is scarce a departure from order but leads to or is indissolubly connected with a departure from morality." It is said that Senators wept. I imagine the angels wept also. Fortunately not even the tears of angels can ever blot out that sentence.

[1] A comedy by James Shirley, a later Elizabethan dramatist.

Strachey's "Queen Victoria"

It is perhaps as difficult to write a good life as to live one," says Giles Lytton Strachey (1880—)in the preface to *Eminent Victorians* (1918), the first book in which that much-read Georgian turned with definite purpose to the writing of biography. Even before that he had published some good life-sketches in *Landmarks in French Literature* (1912), and since then he has so far removed dullness from biography that it is easy reading. It is noteworthy that the first critical writing of Strachey was on the French classicists of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. It is, moreover, significant that in 1922 he brought out another work on this period, *Books and Characters,* and that in 1925 he lectured on Pope. From the literature of the eighteenth century his own style gained no doubt a slight chilliness, a sense of restraint, and the high virtue of lucidity. When his *Queen Victoria* appeared in 1921, it had a reception somewhat like that accorded to Macaulay's *History of England* in the middle of the preceding century: it almost superseded on drawing-room tables the latest novels. That *Queen Victoria* was dedicated to a novelist, Virginia Woolf, herself a writer on the art of biography, suggested a kinship of types that has not gone unnoted by readers of the so-called new biography. Here was a book, relieved of the load of internal documentation which had become a convention of the older biography; here was a story told with diverting crises and climaxes reminiscent of dramatic structure; and here were infinitesimal doses of irony which gave tone and zest to narrator and reader. What Strachey was doing for biography was, first of all, to give it clearer form, and second, to make it more human, more lifelike. Then in 1928 was published *Elizabeth and Essex,* another queen, always romantic, the heart of whose mystery no one, not even Strachey, has been able to pluck out. Selecting for study and comment the old theme of how perilous it is to put one's trust in princes, he told that part of the life-story of the capricious Queen which reveals her courtier's growth in favor, his troubled passage from palace to prison,

and his tragic fate. Compared with his *Queen Victoria* Strachey's *Elizabeth and Essex* is a brief succession of colorful scenes, a biographical fragment. *Queen Victoria,* on the other hand, while not exhaustive, is a complete narrative; and in the course of the narrative the biographer's mood changes. The ironic detachment of the earlier part passes into a gentle warmth toward the end which transforms the cool satire into the sentiment of an admiring subject. From this classic book, so far the highest achievement of Strachey's art, the following passage on the Queen's old age and its "golden glory" has been taken.

THE IMPERIAL MATRIARCH *

And so, after the toils and tempests of the day, a long evening followed—mild, serene, and lighted with a golden glory. For an unexampled atmosphere of success and adoration invested the last period of Victoria's life. Her triumph was the summary, the crown, of a greater triumph—the culminating prosperity of a nation. The solid splendour of the decade between Victoria's two jubilees can hardly be paralleled in the annals of England. The sage counsels of Lord Salisbury seemed to bring with them not only wealth and power, but security; and the country settled down, with calm assurance, to the enjoyment of an established grandeur. And—it was only natural—Victoria settled down too. For she was part of the establishment—an essential part as it seemed—a fixture—a magnificent, immovable sideboard in the huge saloon of state. Without her the heaped-up banquet of 1890 would have lost its distinctive quality—the comfortable order of the substantial unambiguous dishes, with their background of weighty glamour, half out of sight.

Her own existence came to harmonise more and more with what was around her. Gradually, imperceptibly, Albert receded. It was not that he was forgotten—that would have been impossible—but that the void created by his absence grew less agonising, and even, at last, less obvious. At last Victoria found it possible to regret the bad weather without immediately reflecting that her "dear Albert always said we could not alter it, but must leave it as it was"; she could even enjoy a good breakfast without considering how "dear Albert" would have liked the buttered eggs. And, as that figure slowly faded, its place was taken, inevitably, by Victoria's own. Her being, revolving for so many years round an external object, now changed its motion and found its centre in itself. It had to be so: her domestic position, the pressure of her public work, her indomitable sense of duty, made anything else impossible. Her egotism proclaimed its rights. Her age

* From *Queen Victoria* by Lytton Strachey, copyright, 1921, by Harcourt, Brace and Company, Inc.

increased still further the surrounding deference; and her force of character, emerging at length in all its plentitude, imposed itself absolutely upon its environment by the conscious effort of an imperious will.

Little by little it was noticed that the outward vestiges of Albert's posthumous domination grew less complete. At Court the stringency of mourning was relaxed. As the Queen drove through the Park in her open carriage with her Highlanders behind her, nursery-maids canvassed eagerly the growing patch of violet velvet in the bonnet with its jet appurtenances on the small bowing head.

It was in her family that Victoria's ascendancy reached its highest point. All her offspring were married; the number of her descendants rapidly increased; there were many marriages in the third generation; and no fewer than thirty-seven of her great-grandchildren were living at the time of her death. A picture of the period displays the royal family collected together in one of the great rooms at Windsor —a crowded company of more than fifty persons, with the imperial matriarch in their midst. Over them all she ruled with a most potent sway. The small concerns of the youngest aroused her passionate interest; and the oldest she treated as if they were children still. The Prince of Wales, in particular, stood in tremendous awe of his mother. She had steadily refused to allow him the slightest participation in the business of government; and he had occupied himself in other ways. Nor could it be denied that he enjoyed himself—out of her sight; but, in that redoubtable presence, his abounding manhood suffered a miserable eclipse. Once, at Osborne, when, owing to no fault of his, he was too late for a dinner party, he was observed standing behind a pillar and, wiping the sweat from his forehead, trying to nerve himself to go up to the Queen. When at last he did so, she gave him a stiff nod, whereupon he vanished immediately behind another pillar, and remained there until the party broke up. At the time of this incident the Prince of Wales was over fifty years of age.

It was inevitable that the Queen's domestic activities should occasionally trench upon the domain of high diplomacy; and this was especially the case when the interests of her eldest daughter, the Crown Princess of Prussia, were at stake. The Crown Prince held liberal opinions; he was much influenced by his wife; and both were detested by Bismarck, who declared with scurrilous emphasis that

the Englishwoman and her mother were a menace to the Prussian State. The feud was still further intensified when, on the death of the old Emperor (1888), the Crown Prince succeeded to the throne. A family entanglement brought on a violent crisis. One of the daughters of the new Empress had become betrothed to Prince Alexander of Battenberg, who had lately been ejected from the throne of Bulgaria owing to the hostility of the Tsar. Victoria, as well as the Empress, highly approved of the match. Of the two brothers of Prince Alexander, the elder had married another of her granddaughters, and the younger was the husband of her daughter, the Princess Beatrice; she was devoted to the handsome young man; and she was delighted by the prospect of the third brother—on the whole the handsomest, she thought, of the three—also becoming a member of her family. Unfortunately, however, Bismarck was opposed to the scheme. He perceived that the marriage would endanger the friendship between Germany and Russia, which was vital to his foreign policy, and he announced that it must not take place. A fierce struggle between the Empress and the Chancellor followed. Victoria, whose hatred of her daughter's enemy was unbounded, came over to Charlottenburg to join in the fray. Bismarck, over his pipe and lager, snorted out his alarm. The Queen of England's object, he said, was clearly political—she wished to estrange Germany and Russia—and very likely she would have her way. "In family matters," he added, "she is not used to contradiction"; she would "bring the parson with her in her travelling bag and the bridegroom in her trunk, and the marriage would come off on the spot." But the man of blood and iron was not to be thwarted so easily, and he asked for a private interview with the Queen. The details of their conversation are unknown; but it is certain that in the course of it Victoria was forced to realise the meaning of resistance to that formidable personage, and that she promised to use all her influence to prevent the marriage. The engagement was broken off; and in the following year Prince Alexander of Battenberg united himself to Fraulein Loisinger, an actress at the court theatre of Darmstadt.

But such painful incidents were rare. Victoria was growing very old; with no Albert to guide her, with no Beaconsfield to enflame her, she was willing enough to abandon the dangerous questions of diplomacy to the wisdom of Lord Salisbury, and to concentrate her energies upon objects which touched her more nearly and over which

she could exercise an undisputed control. Her home—her court—the monuments at Balmoral—the livestock at Windsor—the organisation of her engagements—the supervision of the multitudinous details of her daily routine—such matters played now an even greater part in her existence than before. Her life passed in an extraordinary exactitude. Every moment of her day was mapped out beforehand; the succession of her engagements was immutably fixed; the dates of her journeys—to Osborne, to Balmoral, to the South of France, to Windsor, to London—were hardly altered from year to year. She demanded from those who surrounded her a rigid precision in details, and she was preternaturally quick in detecting the slightest deviation from the rules which she had laid down. Such was the irresistible potency of her personality, that anything but the most implicit obedience to her wishes was felt to be impossible; but sometimes somebody was unpunctual; and unpunctuality was one of the most heinous of sins. Then her displeasure—her dreadful displeasure—became all too visible. At such moments there seemed nothing surprising in her having been the daughter of a martinet.

But these storms, unnerving as they were while they lasted, were quickly over, and they grew more and more exceptional. With the return of happiness a gentle benignity flowed from the aged Queen. Her smile, once so rare a visitant to those saddened features, flitted over them with an easy alacrity; the blue eyes beamed; the whole face, starting suddenly from its pendulous expressionlessness, brightened and softened and cast over those who watched it an unforgettable charm. For in her last years there was a fascination in Victoria's amiability which had been lacking even from the vivid impulse of her youth. Over all who approached her—or very nearly all—she threw a peculiar spell. Her grandchildren adored her; her ladies waited upon her with a reverential love. The honour of serving her obliterated a thousand inconveniences—the monotony of a court existence, the fatigue of standing, the necessity for a superhuman attentiveness to the minutiæ of time and space. As one did one's wonderful duty one could forget that one's legs were aching from the infinitude of the passages at Windsor, or that one's bare arms were turning blue in the Balmoral cold.

What, above all, seemed to make such service delightful was the detailed interest which the Queen took in the circumstances of those around her. Her absorbing passion for the comfortable common-

places, the small crises, the recurrent sentimentalities, of domestic life constantly demanded wider fields for its activity; the sphere of her own family, vast as it was, was not enough; she became the eager confidante of the household affairs of her ladies; her sympathies reached out to the palace domestics; even the housemaids and scullions—so it appeared—were the objects of her searching inquiries, and of her heartfelt solicitude when their lovers were ordered to a foreign station, or their aunts suffered from an attack of rheumatism which was more than usually acute.

Nevertheless the due distinctions of rank were immaculately preserved. The Queen's mere presence was enough to ensure that; but, in addition, the dominion of court etiquette was paramount. For that elaborate code, which had kept Lord Melbourne stiff upon the sofa and ranged the other guests in silence about the round table according to the order of precedence, was as punctiliously enforced as ever. Every evening after dinner, the hearth-rug, sacred to royalty, loomed before the profane in inaccessible glory, or, on one or two terrific occasions, actually lured them magnetically forward to the very edge of the abyss. The Queen, at the fitting moment, moved toward her guests; one after the other they were led up to her; and, while dualogue followed dualogue in constraint and embarrassment, the rest of the assembly stood still, without a word. Only in one particular was the severity of the etiquette allowed to lapse. Throughout the greater part of the reign the rule that ministers must stand during their audiences with the Queen had been absolute. When Lord Derby, the Prime Minister, had an audience of Her Majesty after a serious illness, he mentioned it afterwards, as a proof of the royal favour, that the Queen had remarked "How sorry she was she could not ask him to be seated." Subsequently, Disraeli, after an attack of gout and in a moment of extreme expansion on the part of Victoria, had been offered a chair; but he had thought it wise humbly to decline the privilege. In her later years, however, the Queen invariably asked Mr. Gladstone and Lord Salisbury to sit down.

Sometimes the solemnity of the evening was diversified by a concert, an opera, or even a play. One of the most marked indications of Victoria's enfranchisement from the thraldom of widowhood had been her resumption—after an interval of thirty years—of the custom of commanding dramatic companies from London to perform before

the Court at Windsor. On such occasions her spirits rose high. She loved acting; she loved a good plot; above all, she loved a farce. Engrossed by everything that passed upon the stage she would follow, with childlike innocence, the unwinding of the story; or she would assume an air of knowing superiority and exclaim in triumph, "There! You didn't expect *that,* did you?" when the *dénouement* came. Her sense of humour was of a vigorous though primitive kind. She had been one of the very few persons who had always been able to appreciate the Prince Consort's jokes; and, when these were cracked no more, she could still roar with laughter, in the privacy of her household, over some small piece of fun—some oddity of an ambassador, or some ignorant Minister's *faux pas.* When the jest grew subtle she was less pleased; but, if it approached the confines of the indecorous, the danger was serious. To take a liberty called down at once Her Majesty's most crushing disapprobation; and to say something improper was to take the greatest liberty of all. Then the royal lips sank down at the corners, the royal eyes stared in astonished protrusion, and in fact the royal countenance became inauspicious in the highest degree. The transgressor shuddered into silence, while the awful "We are not amused" annihilated the dinner table. Afterwards, in her private entourage, the Queen would observe that the person in question was, she very much feared, "not discreet"; it was a verdict from which there was no appeal.

In general, her esthetic tastes had remained unchanged since the days of Mendelssohn, Landseer, and Lablache. She still delighted in the roulades of Italian opera; she still demanded a high standard in the execution of a pianoforte duet. Her views on painting were decided; Sir Edwin, she declared, was perfect; she was much impressed by Lord Leighton's manners; and she profoundly distrusted Mr. Watts. From time to time she ordered engraved portraits to be taken of members of the royal family; on these occasions she would have the first proofs submitted to her, and, having inspected them with minute particularity, she would point out their mistakes to the artists, indicating at the same time how they might be corrected. The artists invariably discovered that Her Majesty's suggestions were of the highest value. In literature her interests were more restricted. She was devoted to Lord Tennyson; and, as the Prince Consort had admired George Eliot, she perused "Middlemarch":

she was disappointed. There is reason to believe, however, that the romances of another female writer, whose popularity among the humbler classes of Her Majesty's subjects was at one time enormous, secured, no less, the approval of Her Majesty. Otherwise she did not read very much.

Once, however, the Queen's attention was drawn to a publication which it was impossible for her to ignore. "The Greville Memoirs," filled with a mass of historical information of extraordinary importance, but filled also with descriptions, which were by no means flattering, of George IV, William IV, and other royal persons, was brought out by Mr. Reeve. Victoria read the book, and was appalled. It was, she declared, a "dreadful and really scandalous book," and she could not say "how *horrified* and *indignant*" she was at Greville's "indiscretion, indelicacy, ingratitude towards friends, betrayal of confidence and shameful disloyalty towards his Sovereign." She wrote to Disraeli to tell him that in her opinion it was *very important* that the book should be severely censured and discredited." "The tone in which he speaks of royalty," she added, "is unlike anything one sees in history even, and is most reprehensible." Her anger was directed with almost equal vehemence against Mr. Reeve for his having published "such an abominable book," and she charged Sir Arthur Helps to convey to him her deep displeasure. Mr. Reeve, however, was impenitent. When Sir Arthur told him that, in the Queen's opinion, "the book degraded royalty," he replied: "Not at all; it elevates it by the contrast it offers between the present and the defunct state of affairs." But this adroit defence failed to make any impression upon Victoria; and Mr. Reeve, when he retired from the public service, did not receive the knighthood which custom entitled him to expect. Perhaps if the Queen had known how many caustic comments upon herself Mr. Reeve had quietly suppressed in the published Memoirs, she would have been almost grateful to him; but, in that case, what would she have said of Greville? Imagination boggles at the thought. As for more modern essays upon the same topic, Her Majesty, it is to be feared, would have characterised them as "not discreet."

But as a rule the leisure hours of that active life were occupied with recreations of a less intangible quality than the study of literature or the appreciation of art. Victoria was a woman not only of vast property but of innumerable possessions. She had inherited

an immense quantity of furniture, of ornaments, of china, of plate, of valuable objects of every kind; her purchases, throughout a long life, made a formidable addition to these stores; and there flowed in upon her, besides, from every quarter of the globe, a constant stream of gifts. Over this enormous mass she exercised an unceasing and minute supervision, and the arrangement and the contemplation of it, in all its details, filled her with an intimate satisfaction. The collecting instinct has its roots in the very depths of human nature; and, in the case of Victoria, it seemed to owe its force to two of her dominating impulses—the intense sense, which had always been hers, of her own personality, and the craving which, growing with the years, had become in her old age almost an obsession, for fixity, for solidity, for the setting up of palpable barriers against the outrages of change and time. When she considered the multitudinous objects which belonged to her, or, better still, when, choosing out some section of them as the fancy took her, she actually savoured the vivid richness of their individual qualities, she saw herself deliciously reflected from a million facets, felt herself magnified miraculously over a boundless area, and was well pleased. That was just as it should be; but then came the dismaying thought—everything slips away, crumbles, vanishes; Sèvres dinner-services get broken; even golden basins go unaccountably astray; even one's self, with all the recollections and experiences that make up one's being, fluctuates, perishes, dissolves. . . . But no! It could not, should not be so! There should be no changes and no losses! Nothing should ever move—neither the past nor the present—and she herself least of all! And so the tenacious woman, hoarding her valuables, decreed their immortality with all the resolution of her soul. She would not lose one memory or one pin.

She gave orders that nothing should be thrown away—and nothing was. There, in drawer after drawer, in wardrobe after wardrobe, reposed the dresses of seventy years. But not only the dresses—the furs and the mantles and subsidiary frills and the muffs and the parasols and the bonnets—all were ranged in chronological order, dated and complete. A great cupboard was devoted to the dolls; in the china room at Windsor a special table held the mugs of her childhood, and her children's mugs as well. Mementoes of the past surrounded her in serried accumulations. In every room the tables were powdered thick with the photographs of relatives;

their portraits, revealing them at all ages, covered the walls; their figures, in solid marble, rose up from pedestals, or gleamed from brackets in the form of gold and silver statuettes. The dead, in every shape—in miniatures, in porcelain, in enormous life-size oil-paintings—were perpetually about her. John Brown stood upon her writing-table in solid gold. Her favourite horses and dogs, endowed with a new durability, crowded round her footsteps. Sharp, in silver gilt, dominated the dinner table; Boy and Boz lay together among unfading flowers, in bronze. And it was not enough that each particle of the past should be given the stability of metal or of marble: the whole collection, in its arrangement, no less than its entity, should be immutably fixed. There might be additions, but there might never be alterations. No chintz might change, no carpet, no curtain, be replaced by another; or, if long use at last made it necessary, the stuffs and the patterns must be so identically reproduced that the keenest eye might not detect the difference. No new picture could be hung upon the walls at Windsor, for those already there had been put in their places by Albert, whose decisions were eternal. So, indeed, were Victoria's. To ensure that they should be the aid of the camera was called in. Every single article in the Queen's possession was photographed from several points of view. These photographs were submitted to Her Majesty, and when, after careful inspection, she had approved of them, they were placed in a series of albums, richly bound. Then, opposite each photograph, an entry was made, indicating the number of the article, the number of the room in which it was kept, its exact position in the room and all its principal characteristics. The fate of every object which had undergone this process was henceforth irrevocably sealed. The whole multitude, once and for all, took up its steadfast station. And Victoria, with a gigantic volume or two of the endless catalogue always beside her, to look through, to ponder upon, to expatiate over, could feel, with a double contentment, that the transitoriness of this world had been arrested by the amplitude of her might.

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